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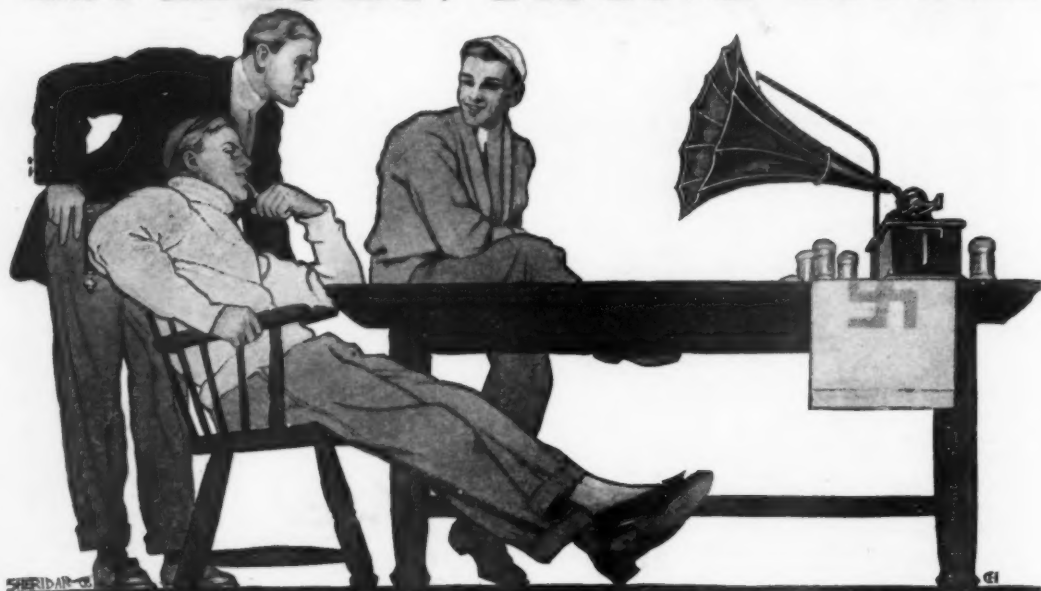


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THE FINISH OF MISS FORTESCUE

The EDISON PHONOGRAPH



"For it's always fair weather when good fellows get together"

—particularly if that prince of good fellows, the Edison Phonograph, happens to be one of the crowd. Never was there a jollier companion or a more versatile entertainer. It's a whole show in itself. It sings all the new songs, has a wonderful repertoire of all sorts of good music and can tell a funny story with the best of them. You need never be lonely or blue, or lack for amusement if you have an Edison Phonograph for company.

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A New York manager paid Harry Lauder a fabulous salary to come over from England and sing for a few weeks at his theatre, because nobody else can sing comic songs in the Scotch dialect as Harry Lauder does. Harry Lauder has enriched the March list by making records of seven of his best songs.

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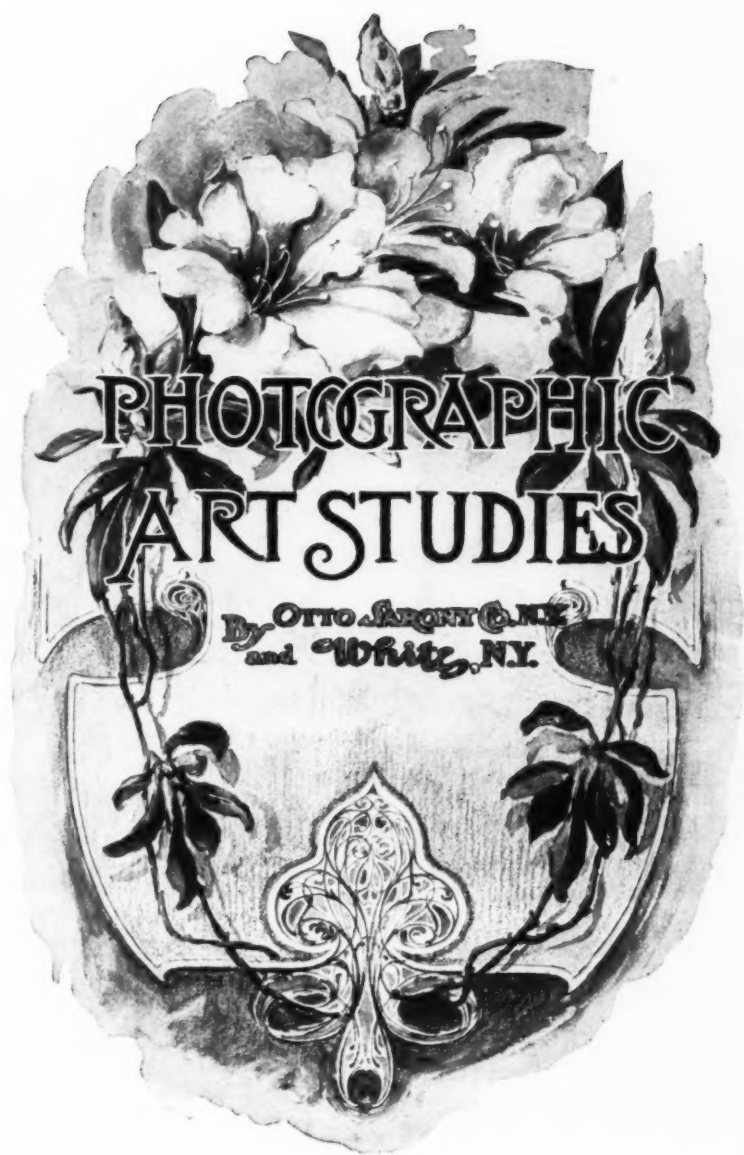
contains the newest songs, the best recent instrumental music and the best of the old music that you never get tired of. Go to the nearest Edison store today and spend a delightful half-hour in hearing the new March Records.

Ask your dealer or write to us for THE PHONOGRAM, describing each Record in detail;

THE SUPPLEMENTAL CATALOGUE, listing the new March Records;

THE COMPLETE CATALOGUE, listing all Edison Records now in existence. Records in all foreign languages.

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THE MAXINE ELLIOTT SERIES













PHOTOGRAPH BY OTTO SARONY CO. N.Y.

THE MAXINE ELLIOTT SERIES





















PHOTOGRAPH BY White, N.Y.

MISS FLORA JULIET BOWLEY









PHOTOGRAPH BY C. WHITE, N.Y.

MISS ANNE MEREDITH











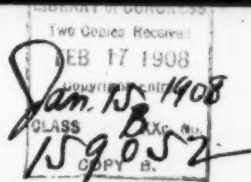




DRAWN BY FREDERICK J. MULHAUPT

"Everything you say seems to hit me hard"

"The Finish of Miss Fortesque"—Page 706



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MAGAZINE

Vol. X

March, 1908

No. 5

The Land of Her Fathers

BY WILLIAM B. MAC HARG

ILLUSTRATED BY F. DE FORREST SCHOOK

I.

SMELLS of leather, and other smells, came out from the factory, and its windows in rows upon rows were lighted by the afternoon-sun, as Otto—the man for whom it had made hundreds of thousands of dollars—looked back at it from the street-car. The sunshine warmed him, and when the car had reached the corner of Lincoln Park, he got off to walk the last three-quarters of a mile of his way homeward.

His faded blue eyes, housed under thick brows and surrounded by numberless thready wrinkles, twinkled good-naturedly at the people with lunch-baskets, who sat on benches on both sides of the wide, pleasant path, and at the children playing on the grass. He loved children. Soon the path, turning up a flight of steps, led to a driveway where an automobile was standing. The chauffeur was on the ground, busy—after the manner of chauffeurs—with wrenches and an oil-can, and a woman with a baby in her arms sat in the tonneau. When she saw Otto, she smiled and nodded, and recognizing her as a servant who had worked for him, he stopped and shook hands with her.

"I see you have a good place, Clara,

and not too hard work," he said, smiling, and he poked his finger at the baby, who seized it and tried to put it into his mouth.

"He is cutting his teeth," said the woman, in explanation. "How is Mrs. Schindler?"

While he answered her questions Otto played with the baby, and when in his turn he had a chance to ask something, he said:

"Who's baby is this, Clara?"

The woman's face changed with surprise and she looked at him incredulously.

"Great Father! You are not fooling, Mr. Schindler?" she said, uneasily. "Surely you know. It is your own grandbaby."

He grew red, not trying to hide his confusion, and seized the little hands and covered them with caresses, his face bent over them.

"I have not seen him lately. They change so fast, Clara."

When at last the automobile rolled away, he stood for a moment looking after it, his eyes filled with unsatisfied longing, then went on through the park and up the broad stone steps of his home. Still in his eyes was that look of sadness.

In the library, after he had changed his shoes for carpet-slippers, and had sat

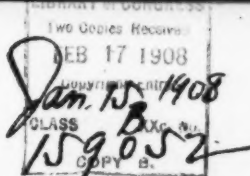


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In the library, after he had changed his shoes for carpet-slippers, and had sat

down to read his German paper—the news of his adopted city in the language he loved best—he kept one eye upon his wife where she sat in her silk dress, sewing.

Presently, in an even, careful voice, which did not betray his emotion, he said: "I saw the grandchild to-day."

His wife looked up with quick interest. "He must have grown, Otto."

"He has grown so much I did not know him. He is cutting his teeth. Clara is working for them, and I did not know that either."

He kept his eyes fixed steadily, though he did not know what he was reading, but it was not possible for him long to conceal his feelings, and at last he dropped the paper suddenly.

"This we get, Sophie, because ten years ago we moved out of a little house into this big one," he said bitterly.

His wife looked up quietly. "There is money enough for one still twice as big, Otto. When I go out, people say, 'There goes the wife of Mr. Schindler, the rich shoe-manufacturer.' Then I think, 'That is my Otto of whom they are speaking.' I am sure nobody deserves a big house if you do not."

"God save me from a house bigger than this one," he answered fiercely. "It would have been better if I had been saved already from one of this size." Then, lest she should mistake him, he added more gently, "It is not the money."

"Anna wished the big house, Otto, and see how well she has done for herself. Every few days you can read in the papers something about her, and you know you are proud of it. Now that they are going to Europe that will be in the papers also. They are coming Sunday to say good-by to us."

He did not pick up the paper again, but sat with blind eyes, answering nothing.

For several years people had been saying to him, "You have every right to be proud of your daughter." And he had smiled, accepting their congratulations. But the smile was only painted on his shell. Something within him answered to it, "Smile as much as you want to, but you know that the higher she goes the

further she gets from you, and that is breaking your heart."

He was growing old. Doubts and longings oppressed him, and he thought of his youth very often. He had no intention of going back to Germany, yet he felt that the best place for a man to die was the one he had been born in; all his forefathers, so far as he knew, had died in the same house. And he could not overcome this fierce home-sickness, and these times of depression, by thoughts of his success in his new country. Instead, he said to himself:

"What does all that amount to? I have grown rich in America, but I have lost my daughter, and I am going to be buried in a strange graveyard. That is what I get for being a republican. Oh, that she had stayed little, like when I held her on my knee, or that I might die looking up at those same rafters that my father looked at when he was dying!"

But, as he had learned two things very thoroughly—that a man's thoughts are not as a woman's thoughts, and an old man's thoughts are not like a young one's—he let no one know he had such feelings.

When the visitors came on Sunday, he went to the door to meet them, and took the baby onto his shoulder, and walked up and down with him, shouting. They were as noisy as if he had been a baby also. As he led his daughter in on his arm to a dinner which had been prepared only after long consultation between the two old people, she said, smiling: "How nice it is to see you in such good spirits, father."

But in spite of everything it was a formal visit. They talked of the cities they were going to see, and the dates on which they would be in them. And presently, as he sat looking across at her, proud of her clear-cut American beauty, Otto fell silent. Deep in his heart he knew that Anna loved him, and would weep when he died, but he would rather have had her cry a little over him while he was still living; and he could not help recalling how many times, though she did not guess it, she had wounded him—beginning with that day when, as a little



"I saw the grand child to-day"

girl, she had refused to learn German. Steeped in the literature of his own land, and loving Germany with all his heart, he had suffered from this.

"So you will be content to read in translations the greatest things that have been written," he had said with feeling. "Prut! And what history do you study? You know Greece and Rome and England—that is all you know anything about."

"Those are the ones for which prizes are given," she answered, simply, and in spite of all, something in this answer had appealed to him.

He recalled his pride in her cleverness at school, which was not less than his pride in her beauty; and his greater pride when she had come back from Vassar, knowing many things the very names of which were unpronounceable to him, with her beauty grown more even-lined and dignified, and her nervous energy refined and subjugated.

And his joy in the many young men in long coats who came to the house, and the carriages which stopped with jingling chains at his door—it was at her wish that they had moved into this grander neighborhood, where German was less often spoken—even though he understood that through it all she was drawing further and further away from him, and making herself wholly American, as if there were some sort of disgrace in having ancestors who had not landed at Plymouth Rock.

But he recalled also how, through her, there had come to him the one great disappointment of his life, at the time of the German Prince Henry's visit to America. For certain officers attended Prince Henry, or being in the country at the time took occasion to greet him, and among these was von Endeman, son of two people to whom Otto in the little village of his childhood had been taught to look up as lord and lady; and the young lieutenant, carried off his feet by Anna's beauty, after a few days of mad courting, had asked her hand of her father. That night his wife heard Otto sobbing in the darkness, and asked:

"Are you sick? What is the matter?"

"It is only happiness, Sophie," he answered. "Listen, and I will tell you the most wonderful thing that has happened in this world. How would you like it if our Anna should be the Von Endeman lady? I know that great place so well, but in my boyhood it was from outside the gates I looked at it. What a wonder if now a child of mine should be its mistress; but that is not impossible."

Even to-day he had trouble in realizing that Anna had refused Lieutenant Von Endeman; at the time he had urged and expostulated.

"Do you know any other young man to equal him?" he had asked argumentatively.

"Not any so broad or so tall," answered Anna—and added, smiling, "or so polite."

"Then what do you want?"

She looked up quickly. "Someone who will not think he is conferring a favor on me if he lets me give up my life to him."

"Good gracious, Anna! There are no better lovers than Germans. Whose wives wear more diamonds?"

"If I thought I should look better to my husband for having on diamonds, I would not want him."

"Anna, Anna, you do not know what you are refusing! There is a whole town there which would worship you." And as he knew no reason why he should conceal what to him was the greatest argument of all: "When you went past, people would say, 'That is the daughter of Otto Schindler. He was an apprentice-boy in this town, and went away to America. Now his daughter has come back to be the lady over all of us.'"

She shook her head with gentle firmness, understanding how to him this marriage would be the crown of his whole life, the seal of his success; and standing in front of her, his hands stretched out, partly in entreaty, more in command, he said with tremulous emphasis:

"Anna, do this, or I will not think of you any longer as my daughter. It is right that young people should let old ones choose for them."

He remembered still how her level eyes, looking into his without wavering, had made him know that in this matter

she would accept no guidance, and he could hear again the bitter cry of his defeat:

"Oh, no! he is a German, Anna—that is enough for you—you will have nothing to do with Germans."

That, he knew, had been the day of their separation; and when later she married a rich young American, of full life and many interests, she had gone no further from him, though their life and his were entirely different.

Yet he did not find it hard to like her husband. He enjoyed meeting and talking with him. So now he roused himself presently and fell into conversation with him across one corner of the table, while his wife and daughter talked over another.

Soon he was laughing, and Anna heard him say: "But the best thing was the Professor Schweinebraten. We boys made fun of him, shouting 'Schweinbrot' at him when he went along the street. After a while he took to despair, and had his name changed to Ullman."

She frowned, knowing that he was talking of his German boyhood, and said warningly: "Other people are not interested in those things as you are, father. You must not talk about them so much as to make a bore of yourself."

He looked at her with troubled eyes, shrinking from the thought of being a bore, but the face of the young man reassured him.

"He likes to hear it, Anna. You are not bored, sir, are you?"

The young man shook his head.

"Then he was not brought up in the midst of it, as I was," said Anna, good-naturedly.

"Well, now," cried Otto, "it is time for wine and cigars. The women—they may go or stay, just as it pleases them, and I will show you something it is fun to look at."

He got up from the table and brought a little book in worn board covers—the "*wanderbuch*" he had carried during the year of his travels as a journeyman shoemaker—and opening it, showed how its front part was taken up with pages of

good advice to young men from a paternal government, and the back part with tables of distances, and all its middle with the crabbed writings and stamped seals of town-clerks—one for every town he had visited. He handled it lovingly—as a woman touches dead flowers from her bridal bouquet. Every name within it had a meaning for him, filling him with memories. The young man looked over his shoulder with interest.

"In this town," said Otto, with his finger on a page, "I had thoughts of coming to America." He laughed. "The town-clerk there was mad because I had changed my road and had not gone the way I said I was going. That was not allowable. When he swore, and told me to 'go to Moscow,' which is the same as we say here, 'go to the devil,' I answered, 'Not at all, I have a better place to go to.' I was thinking of America then, but as quick as I got over being angry, I forgot it."

"But you remembered again," said the young man, smiling, "for you came finally."

Otto's eyes sought his wife's across the table. "It was foreordained for me, I think, that way, and if I did not find one reason for it I would have found another," he said, merrily.

"Do not believe a word he says," cried Sophie across the table, bridling. "He would not have come. It was I that made him."

"Poof!" cried her husband. "What nonsense! It began before I knew she was living. I was among the most faithful of those who went to the apprentices' school on Sunday mornings to hear republicanism. On other days they could not teach it, but on Sunday, when by law there was no school, the schoolmasters taught anyway. They did this without pay, and so they could teach what they wanted to. When I read how in the *reichstag* someone gets up and talks republicanism, I laugh and say, 'Oho, mister, you must have gone to school Sunday mornings.' Yet she pretends I would not have come except for her!"

Sophie shook her head until the little gray and golden curls upon her neck fluttered.

"That is how it is with a woman," said Otto. "They think they are the cause of everything. But I want to tell you I was not yet ten years old when I heard read a letter from Peter Ott, who had run away from our town because of poaching. He was in Cincinnati, and he wrote that he had hunting-dogs, which he kept in his back yard. People thought that Peter, who was a great cheat, must have made the Americans believe he was high-born, so they would let him keep dogs. With us only the high-born could keep them. And though I was at that time little, I never forgot about Peter, so I say that it was foreordained for me."

"If that is so," cried Sophie, shaking her head, and laughing, "then I was foreordained for you, also."

"Well, perhaps that is so, too," Otto admitted, smiling at her. "For in the end, sir, it happened this way:

"It was in Düsseldorf that I had a friend, Henry Hummel, and he had met a girl and I had found this lady, so we were both in love at the same time. I said to Henry, 'Two things are in front of us. We must be master shoemakers or we must be something else'—because journeymen could not marry until they were masters. But to be masters one must give a great sum of money to the shoemakers' guild, and of money we did not have one bit.

"It is as fresh to me as if it had happened just a minute ago. We were in a field, sitting under a tree, and after a while Henry got up and said, 'I have made up my mind, Otto.' Tears ran down his cheeks, for he did not want to give up his trade, but he went into the town and gave up his trade, and found work in a factory, and afterward he was married. Factory workers could marry. But I sat still under the tree and watched him go.

"In Düsseldorf the shoemakers took newspapers, and we admired Abraham Lincoln and Garibaldi. I thought of both those men while I sat there. It seemed also that everything in my life rose up to me—the letter of Peter Ott, who kept dogs; the schoolmasters who taught on Sunday—even that same Schweinebraten; the town-clerk who swore because I had changed my road. And after a while

I, too, got up and went toward the town, but I did not know what I was going to do yet. Everything was boiling inside my head, and I passed people who turned and looked after me, because I kept throwing my arms about and talking to myself while I was going. Then, all at once, who should I see walking in the street but Sophie, and I went up and stopped in front of her, and I said in a loud voice, 'How much do you love me?'"

"He was like a crazy man," said Sophie. "I did not know what to make of him."

"It may very well be that I was like a crazy man," said Otto, "but there was someone there who laughed and grew red and put her face into her hands and answered, 'How can I tell it with only one tongue?' 'It is good,' I answered in the gravest manner possible, for now I knew what I was going to do about it, 'that you love me so much, for it is going to be hard for you. We are going to leave everybody here, and go to America.' So we did that, and now I am a master shoemaker such as I never dreamed of."

Sophie had risen and come round the table, and with a quick gesture he lifted her hand and kissed it. The gaze of Anna's husband turned from them and met that of his wife, and his eyes were filled with tears that he did not try to keep back.

"But that is all long ago," said Otto, after a moment. "That young love which made us strong is as far behind us now, as it is in front of this little one, the grandchild."

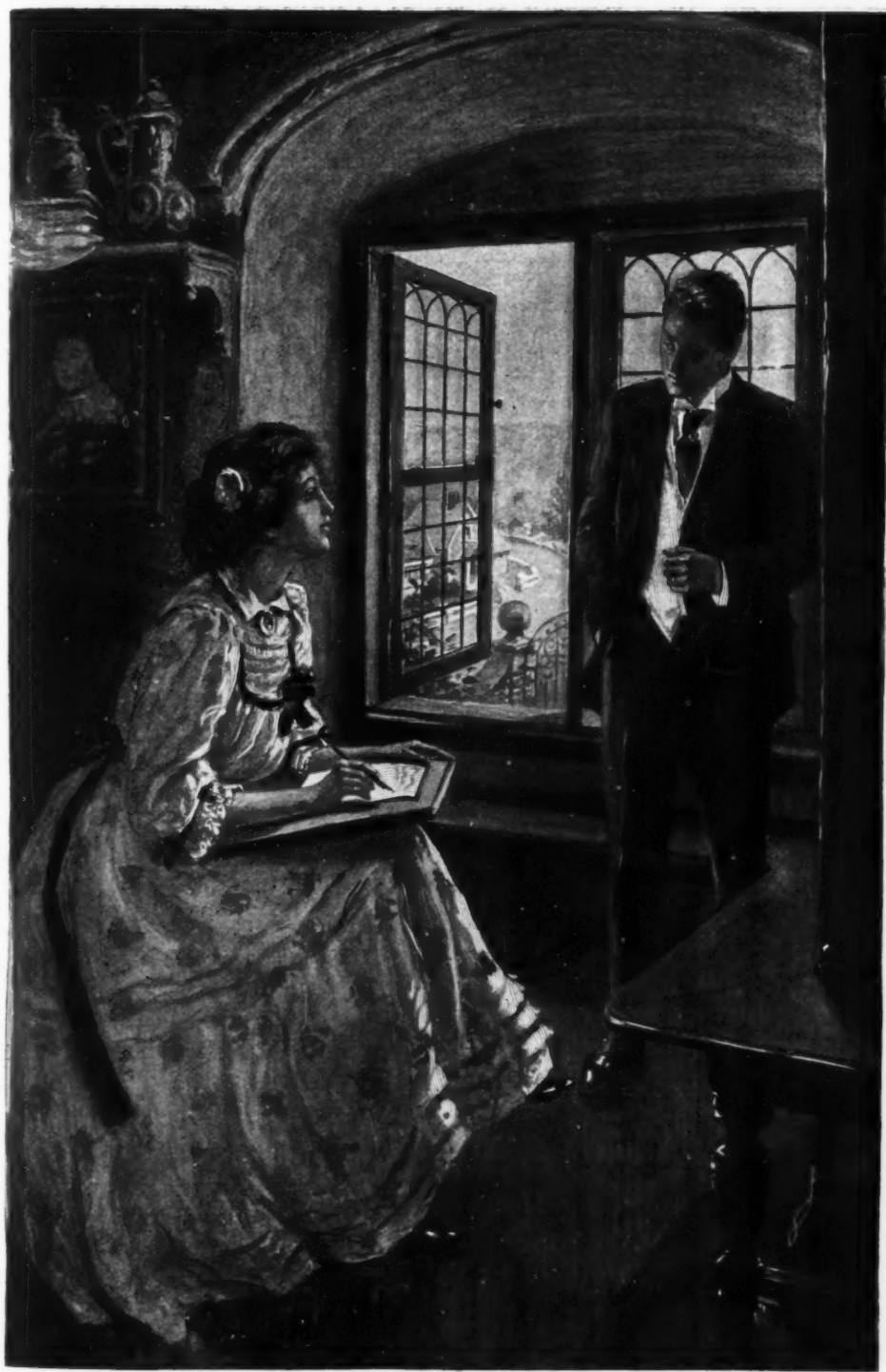
II.

The steamer, taking them up at New York, dropped them in Cherbourg.

"I promised I would write them every week," said Anna to her husband. "You must remind me, Harry, or I shall be sure to forget it."

She wrote from Paris, from Rome, and Alexandria; then returning, after a long hiatus, from a mountain-village of Switzerland, and afterward from Berlin.

She laughed with her husband, now



"I want to write a letter and—and I don't know how"

they were in Germany, because he, whose ancestry was all English, had to act as interpreter for her in the cities and villages, from whose daily life she was separated by a single generation. But he thought sometimes she was a little sorry, for she admired Berlin.

It was at his suggestion, not hers, that they took time to visit the birthplace of her father, and made a runaway trip of it, leaving the baby and its nurse behind them for a day. She left womanhood behind her, so, for the moment, with the baby, and was like a girl. They had seen French villages, where the houses were as if the people had just moved into them and had not got settled yet, though, indeed, they had been living there for half a dozen generations; the houses of her ancestral village were not this way, but neither was the village as her father had described it, for now there were factory-chimneys all around it, and the smoke from them went clear up to the castle. But the contented innkeeper was, as they had expected—thinking they were bride and groom—smiling correspondingly, with his fat hands crossed in front of him.

The rich American and his wife undoubtedly had come to see the castle—certainly not the cottages of workers, now springing up everywhere and obscuring old ways of living. There was too much nowadays that was new in Germany. The great people themselves were away at present, but their carriage was being painted on the very premises—if they cared to see it, while he was sending for a guide who would make the castle open for them.

They cared to see it—all newly painted and resplendent, and looked at it with proper veneration, and she climbed into it, and made her husband get in and sit beside her.

"That is enough," she said joyous and youthful. "I only wanted to see how it would feel to be the Von Endeman lady, Harry. But you are not tall or broad enough, and you have not two little thorns of hair upon your lip to make it all seem lifelike."

The guide, who had come and was looking on, thought she was a very merry

lady; and they went with him up to the castle, which was great and impressive—her grandfather had been a cuirassier there, and afterward, growing old, had had charge of the laundry—and when they had seen it, they sought the village again and looked for the house where her father had been born. It was not pleasant to her to see how small it was, with blackened rafters and a look of having been lived in forever. No Schindlers lived there now, but a cooper named Dietrich—a new man, who had not known any Schindlers; the last had died long ago—but some had gone to America. He folded his bare arms, and answered their questions with deference. Next door lived a woman who had known the Schindlers.

And next door was a house even smaller, but more cleanly, where a woman sat by a window knitting. Anna had never seen so contented a woman. From her placid face peaceful eyes shone on them with a gentle luster, and she brought straight-backed chairs. Very well she remembered Otto Schindler, who was a youth in that town—she herself was then a young girl—he went away.

"This is his daughter," said Harry.

The woman's eyes took in Anna with growing wonder—such clothes, for instance; such white and clear complexion; such hands that had not grown rough with working! And she asked doubtfully: "Is it possible? Are you his daughter?"

"She does not speak German."

Perplexity filled the woman's face. "What? But you said she was Otto's daughter. What then does she speak?"

"Only English."

And all at once Anna felt ashamed that she could not ask after her father in German.

"Well, God wills strange things," said the woman at last, "but I do not understand how it is that Otto Schindler's daughter should speak English."

The woman had been lady's-maid to the old Von Endeman lady, who was now dead; all her life had been a lady's-maid, and now that her lady was dead the Von Endemans took care of her, which she thought was the best way. For see! she

was only a little over fifty and already she had her pension. It was best to attach one's self to an old family, though everything in the world was changing, and only a few old families tried to keep up the traditions. If she had a daughter, she would say to her, "Be a lady's-maid; then when you are old they will take care of you." But she did not have any daughter, only a son, who thought there were not changes enough and was always pushing to make things go faster, and talking crazy things, revolutionary and opposed to principle.

Presently the son came in, embarrassed at the sight of strangers, yet with quick, curious glances appraising them—his pale eyes burning with uneasy lights.

"This is the daughter of Otto Schindler," said his mother, "who lived in the next house. I was a young girl then. He went to America."

Quick flames lighted in the boy's face, as he gazed at Anna, so unlike the women he knew, clear-eyed, radiating soft perfume. And she, clothed in a dress which had cost as much as this boy's year's earnings, felt suddenly a sense of incongruity. For by what right was she thus—the "visiting lady"—when her father had been as this boy was, differing in no particular?

A shadow rested on the mother's face. "He has that dream," she said, uneasily, "to go to America. It is a terrible place, I tell him—lynchings, robberies, accidents on railroads—I'm sure the papers print nothing else about it."

The boy spoke English. He had had that of his schoolmaster.

"Is it in the regular course," asked Harry, laughing, "or do they teach it Sunday mornings?"

Besides, there were Germans in the works brought from America to aid in setting up machinery, and he had practiced speaking English with them—"to get ready."

They talked first of Germany. "She says I am foolish." He motioned toward his mother. "But she says also, if she had a daughter she should be a lady's-maid, and I have thought about that. So it might go on forever, not getting forward any. In the end the last young one would

be still a lady's-maid, and the last old one would have to be taken care of."

"Some old ones in America are not lucky enough to get taken care of," said Harry, quietly.

"There is, too, the army. Not of choice I must soon go into it, and for two years my back will grow straighter and my thoughts crooked— that is how my schoolmaster says it. Every so often also I must give proof of who I am, so that they can keep account of me."

And afterward they spoke of America; not of America as in fact—there across the ocean—but as it was in the boy's mind. He grew excited, his pale eyes burning. Of all the evil he had heard of it not one word had remained with him; of the good nothing was forgotten, but had grown, and in his thoughts had become glorified. A "dream" country, as his mother had said. All his hopes—his ideals,—the "long, long thoughts" of his youth had centered there. He was looking from the mountain-top upon his Promised Land, through sun-gilt mists beholding nothing of the evil and suffering there might be there, but only the beauties of its distant towers sun-gilded also. For them, knowing the evil as well as the good, it grew painful to listen.

"Now, I will tell you what America is really," said Harry, when he had finished. "It is a hodge-podge. We aren't all nicely parceled off there as you are—Germans in one country, Frenchmen in another, but are mixed all together—English, Scandinavians, Germans, Poles, Greeks, Italians, Syrians, Terr del Fuegians, Andaman Islanders—"

"Oh, don't, Harry!" cried Anna. Even if the boy's America was only a dream, still she did not wish to destroy it. But was it a dream really?

The boy looked into her clear eyes. "Is it true what he says?" he asked simply, but did not wait for her answer. He breathed her radiant beauty—she was more beautiful than the youngest of the Von Endeman ladies, and if she moved her garments rustled; and yet she was the daughter of Otto Schindler, who had lived in the next house, and because of this she was in herself the refutation of all doubts of America.

She nodded. "Yes, it is true, but he keeps back the good part of it."

And touched deeply—for never in her life had she so wished to be able to explain—to find words for thoughts half-formed and inexpressible—she summoned all her cleverness to her aid.

"They are all he says, but they are also Americans. For you cannot say America is just a place. There is a nation there, but it is more than a nation—it is an idea. Because it is an idea, it can absorb into itself all those different kinds of people. They are Americans before they come there, because they have that idea, and that is why they come; and you, too, are an American, though you may never go there."

His face flamed, but the fire died immediately. "I would go," he said, "but—you see—my mother. She has her pension; all her life she worked for it. She would not give up that. She would not go with me."

A rush of feeling filled Anna. "No, you must stay," she said quickly. "You cannot go, because she needs you. Give me a paper. We will write our name and our address in America. If anything happens," she did not like to say "when your mother dies," "then come, but write us you are coming. We will write anyway. We will send books. My father will help you. He loves alike Germany and America. His heart beats for both of them."

"Do you think you did right?" asked Harry, when they were again in the street. "You rather piled fuel on his imagination." And he added dryly: "He thinks America is paved with gold, you know, and you made him believe it more than ever."

"Is it not?" she quietly answered. "Look at my father."

She felt that until that hour she had never known her father, had never un-

derstood him. Love such as she had never felt for him came with that understanding. And her husband, looking down at her as they walked, saw she was softly crying.

Children were coming home from school, their books in knapsacks on their shoulders; the peaceful life of the quiet village street was going forward. In the morning it had seemed strange to her and foreign, but now it did not. She looked up at her husband through her tears, and smiled.

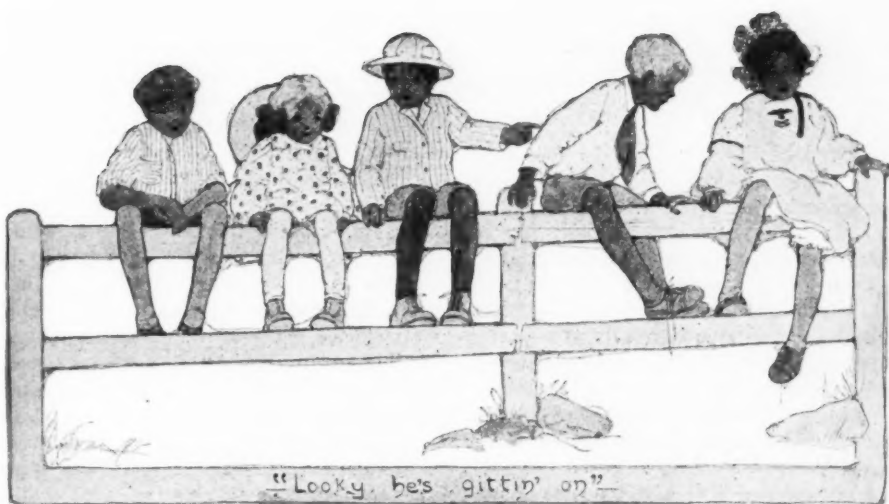
"Harry, you must help me. I want to write a letter, and—I—don't know how."

The long shadows of the trees in the park, cast by the slanting sunlight, pointed away from the window where Otto, year-weary in his adopted country, was sitting, and the postman had just left a letter. On the back of this letter was written:

"Jacob Ditworts, who is postmaster, sends his best wishes to that Otto Schindler who made such excellent portraits of the schoolmaster in his schoolbooks."

But he did not know the writing. So at first he did not open it, but sat with dreamy eyes, recalling Jacob Ditworts, and the Schoolmaster Schweinebraten, and with hungry heart a hundred other thoughts awakened by the postmark. Ah, that good village. And then he opened it, and choked, and his lips parted to say to his wife "Sophie, Anna writes us," but for the instant he kept silence. It was for both, but it was to him first, this letter—like a child's letter—blotted, uncertain—ill-written, ill-spelled, as with her husband's help Anna had tried to form the unfamiliar words and letters, writing in the tongue her father loved—in German.

Tears from his old eyes blurred the ink while he was reading, for his little girl had come back to him.



"Looky, he's gittin' on!"

Dare, Dare, Double-Dare

BY GEORGE ALLAN ENGLAND

ILLUSTRATED BY BLANCHE V. FISHER

I.

REMEMBER that first bicycle of yours, eh? Betcher life! One of the lofty kind—regular giraffe-model, with the front wheel 'bout a mile high, little tag-on wheel behind, and a step to scale the contraption by—provided you didn't miss fire, and hurtle parabola-wise into the mud with one of the pedals grinding your ear.

Remember it? Sure you do! It had a brake, for double-quick "headers," and its tires were all wound round with twine and hay-wire, so that they crawled, and bunched, and went *cr-r-r-r-thump-bump! cr-r-r-r-flop!*—with every revolution.

This giraffe-machine had lain for years in the loft of Mark Rogers' barn, under hay and dust and a flotsam of discarded household-things. When you discovered it, one late July afternoon, you just about dropped dead with heart-failure. Think!

It was a real bicycle—no velocipede, no tricycle, but a real bicycle! And might it not be nursed back to life again? The realization of all that the discovery might mean almost sickened you with emotion. You dashed trembling down the steep stairs, out of the barn, and over to the Big House itself, where you encountered the Powers in guise of Harlan Rogers, eldest and most potent of the clan.

Harlan was sitting on the back porch, whittling a chain out of a solid stick of wood, which was in itself a manifest miracle. Sudden reticence assailed the fortress of your heart, but you persisted, panting:

"Hullo?" (Heuff! Heuff!)

A grunt, but no raising of the eyes, as Harlan shaved a sliver from the stick.

"I found somethin' up in (puff) th'—up in th' barn!"

"Uh?"

"Yep—an old bycycle, an' the handle's

loose, an' the tires is off, an' it's all rusty an' no good, an'—an' if I c'n get it down without botherin' anybody, all by myself—"

"Huh?"

"C'n I use it?"

Harlan considered. You wondered at his aplomb in such a juncture. He didn't even look up; just poised his knife, reflecting where next to tackle the stick.

"Sure!" he pronounced judgment, the while his shavings began to curl. And your heart bounded with a big surge that left you quite weak, so that you hardly mustered force to pipe:

"When? Now? Right off?"

"Uh-huh! Skip! Can't you see I'm busy?"

You stopped to make no answer, not even to say "Thank you!" (Mother prohibited "Thanks" as a vulgarism, by the way), but vamoosed back across the street and scrambled upward to the loft again to claim the eighth wonder of the world which lay there, rusty, tire-loose, and all clotted with dirt, dust, hay, dried grease—corruption beyond words.

And you worked, that afternoon, if ever human being worked. I guess Pharaoh's pyramid-builders had a sinecure by contrast; but this was a labor of love, the salvage of the Giraffe, so you felt it not. Hay-dust, and grease, and July sweat, mingled freely on your person, making rare and impressionistic color-

fects; you coughed, and sneezed, and watered at the eyes, and tore the skin on your hands, but you got the "bicycle," so nothing mattered to you, all alone up there, that hot afternoon, in Rogers' barn-loft.

Ever see an ant lugging a grasshopper's leg eight times its size over rocks and sticks and through tall grass? Of course! Well, then you know the story of getting that rackabone junk out from behind the wrecked mowing-machine and cart-wheels, up over the hay and (with a clothes-line) down the narrow twisty stairs. How could the pipe-stem legs and match-stick arms compass such toil? Pshaw! Give a boy the Brooklyn Bridge, and cash to cookies he'll get away with it. Don't believe it, eh? Oh, very well; you've never been a boy, that's all I've got to say to you!

The bursting pride with which that bicycle was trundled off down the street, every bearing a-squeal, tires flopping, loose treadle going "plunk!" as it slumped a quarter-segment at every revolution! The wallowing orgy, back of the woodshed, resulting in a transfer of most of the dirt and caked grease from the machine to your hands and face! The winding of the tires with string; the family jeers, with subsequent weepings by you; and then the sleeplessness, that night, with feverish thoughts of the morrow, till the Sandman overpowered you, and all of a

sudden—it was broad daylight! Who shall write of these doings in their true perspectives? Nobody, surely, who hath not done the impossible by keeping, even in the years of manhood, the fullness of that brave, timid, weak, ardent, evanescent thing—the Heart of a Boy!—

II.

You tried the Giraffe next morning early, skimping your toilet, bolting your breakfast ostrich-wise, to be the sooner at this maddening joy. It was a fine summer's day, clear and





warm; the roads were hard, albeit dusty, and beckoned you away, away, to Cottage Farms, Coolidge's Corner, or even farther, it might be, where the mysterious regions of the Reservoir lay broadly cradled in their rolling hills. The *wanderlust* was summoning, calling with insistent notes. What, Knight of the Grail ever throbbed with keener anticipations of high adventuring than you did as you trundled your rehabilitated Rackabones out the front gate, with Mother and Sister patronizingly observant from the front stoop, while Brother Paul attended as squire, lackey, "guide, philosopher and friend," to say nothing of general utility-man. (Brother, be it interpolated, owned and had already wearied of a big, big Giraffe, a thing of nickel-plate and awe, and was therefore a Sancho Panza *par excellence*.)

Along the front fence roosted a fringe of Young Americans, with a spattering of Young Americanesses, including (oh, fearsome rapture!) the Lady Blanche. There were comments.

"Gee! Slick, aint it?"

"Slick nuthin'! 'T's been layin' in Rogers' barn more'n a hundred years."

"Huh, I wouldn't ride th' old thing!"

"Good reason why; yuh can't!"

"Can to!"

"Can't nuther!"

"Can!"

"Can't!"

"Arrrh!"

"Tee-hee, aint he skinny?" (This from the Petticoat Brigade).

"Bum bycycle, all tied up with string, an' one treadle half off!"

"Sour grapes!"

"Ah-h-h, dry up, you! Looky, he's git-tin' on!"—

True it was. You were getting on. J-j-jimminy beeswax, what a height! Made you just dizzy to look down, I do declare. Remember it? Kind of a lost, empty feeling, up on that hard seat; such an awful vacuous nothingness all around you—air so tenuous and unreliable to grab at in case of emergency! Seemed like a second-story stunt, at the very least. Feet groped 'round wildly for something to rest on, but found only toe-hold on wabby pedals, and even this only when the pedals were up. Handle-bars shook, too, being loose in their sockets. Awful gaping void there in front—ominous, waiting. Not even Brother's firm grasp and "Steady, now!" could quite reassure. Eagerness to grab Brother's head and hang on; but that were unsportsmanlike as a cowboy "touching leather," so it had to be dismissed with tremulous decision. O-o-oh, my! You'd kinda l-l-like to git down, by crickey, if it hadn't been for public opinion, which still vociferated along the fence, or tittered, as sex dictated.

"There, there, now, you wont fall! You know how to balance! I'll hang on to you as far's the corner. Mind your feet!"

Brother's voice (a rough voice, with bass breaks in its treble) kindled up a spark of courage in your pain-drenched heart. Brother was trundling you gently forward; the big wheel was actually revolving between your knees, jarring slightly over the roughnesses of the road; the pedals were coming up into foot-reach, one-two-one-two. The Giraffe was really-an'-truly in motion and you were still on top, alive! That at least was something. But o-o-oh my! wasn't it a long ways down to the ground? Quite a different proposition from any squatty little bow-kneed velocipede, betcha life!

Yes, you could stick as long as Brother held you, but when he let go—?

You were going faster now, and your soul was a welter of fearsome exultation. You began to forget you were afraid. The intoxication of that "high, pure atmosphere" was penetrating your brain; there was real vigor in your kicks; you were actually steering a trifle! Unheard, unheeded now the jibes, encouragements, tee-hee's and shrill cacklings of your on-following contingent. You were rapidly becoming master of the machine; the road to Elysium loomed straight and broad before you.

("Bless me, this was pleasant, riding on a—wheel!")

Faster, faster still you urged the pedals; the "*plunk! plunk!*" of the loose one sounded ever more and more rapidly. Brother began to trot. The contingent broke into a ragged run. Morrison's woolly pup, Bruiser, dashed out of his yard, yelping at every jump. As for you, pride puffed you inordinately. How were your horns exalted in Israel! Your progress had become a triumph as of old, with captives trailing on behind in the dust that now rose thickly on the July morning-air. You thought of the Lady Blanche, and kicked faster, ever faster. All fear was gone now; even the approaching corner where Brother was to let go had no terrors. You even longed for liberation from his grasp, for independent flight.

It came soon, that flight, for lo! the corner was at hand.

"Now—go it!" cried Brother, and launched you.

Giraffe staggered, swooped eight points to starboard, and shipped a heavy sea, but righted, came up close-hauled on the other tack, and pointed into the wind for a brief moment, then yawed to port. You clung desperately, drunken with exhilarated apprehension; for through the storm and stress you vaguely realized that you were—you were—riding all alone! You forgot to kick; but the slight down-grade of Gardner Street accelerated Giraffe, with disquieting bumps and thumps, as the high cross-swells swashed against your quarter, almost throwing you on your beam-ends.

Giraffe shifted cargo and threatened to turn turtle; but again you threw the helm hard-a-port and again she answered, this time diving head-on at the ragged reefs of Ashley's stone hitching-post. Your speed was nineteen knots, with all your convoy badly distanced despite their full head of steam in chase. Tack-and-tack you swooped along, wind whistling in the cordage, salt-spray flying, with you lashed to the mast, eyes now on the binnacle, now peering out ahead, wildly, to where the fateful cross-current of Chester Street tossed your course into threatening seas.

Now Giraffe was close-reefed, speeding down with a heavy list toward that same maelstrom—and ah—woe, woe! what was this? Down along the Chester gulf-stream another craft was beating; a great craft, a heavy craft, broad-beamed, portentous, of gigantic magnitude—the Allston watering-cart, forsooth, bowling at a round trot, while gushing founts sprayed from its bounteous pipes.

At such a fearsome sight you, Giraffe's skipper, paled and gripped the steering-gear, tugging to head your ship round toward the lee, where wreck might take place easiest on Roelfson's grass-plot; but no, that was not to be. Giraffe, now wholly out of hand, veered sea-sickeningly, dipped, righted again, wallowed in the trough, and plunged square for the water-wagon.

Then the inevitable happened.

Giraffe keeled, swooped like a wounded gull, foundered, and collapsed with clatterings as of an armored knight crashing down on the hoof-packed lists.

And you, what of you?

All hope abandoned, sick with panic, your legs wide-spread, wild fingers clutching convulsively the tenuous ether, eyes bugged-out with horror, you hurtled to earth, *ricochetted*, and rolled spraddling in the dust—but not long was there any dust to roll in; no indeed! the on-trundling water-wagon took good care of that!

Ssss—squirt—squirt!—dash—splash—sssszzz!

O-o-oh! Crickety, that's c-c-cold! Br-r-rrr!

The crude driver, twisting round on

the high wagon-seat, grinned tobacco-ly at sight of a little spindle-shanked creature that looked something like the rats Aunt Angie used to drown in her wash-tub—a creature with drabbled, clinging clothes, streaming hair, and raucous yelps, scrabbling for the sidewalk on all fours.

On the sidewalk a gens or tribe of brassy-hearted *incubi* were making hideously merry; and even one Big Boy who bore a certain likeness to the rat-like creature, was haw-*hee*-hawing too, with a cracked, cackling voice, till fat tears ran down his beaky nose.

III.

You conquered, though—in course of time—even as Alexander conquered his Bucephalus, and having conquered, you rode abroad through many a street, by many a countryside, and also, I regret to confess, into many a ditch. That first Summer of rapid locomotion was a dream, troubled with bruises in the most unlikely places, irrigated with rivulets of tears, but still a dream. For was not the whole world at your feet—or at least such portion of it as lay between the Charles River and Oak Square, Brighton? Occasionally you penetrated even to the Great Signboards, beyond which lay *terra incognita*. At such times, or when you threaded the mazes of Brookline, puffing up long, smooth hills only to coast down short rough ones, the universal passion of discovery thrilled you; yours was the heart of Robinson Crusoe or Vasco de Gama, or the Israelitish scouts of old eager “to spy out the land.”

You rode sometimes with Artie Bryant (who had one of those ridiculous new-style “safeties,” a machine beneath contempt), or beside Fred Morrison on his little trotting pony, and distanced it! Sometimes you even rode with Brother, whose interest in wheeling found a faint recrudescence in your own enthusiasm. But for the most part you fared forth alone, as most worthily befitted an explorer with high aims, and a high, uncertain seat. The dangers of collision were minimized by solitude, maybe?

You rode yourself red-faced, you rode yourself into stupendous sweats and coughing-fits, despite much excellent advice; you made riding your business, while all the other things of life took second rank. Even school faded to a star of the sixth magnitude, when Autumn brought it back to your enchanted life. You haven't forgotten yet those nerve-twisting days of September when the school-benches were so hard and the clock so slow in coming to four, in giving you freedom to race home, fling your

books down and yourself upon the Cira-*raffe's* back, to ride, ride, ride till supper-time; and after it to ruin your digestion by still more riding in the gloom! No, indeed, you haven't—and never can; for nothing in earth, or sea, or sky, to-day can give you pleasure comparable to that!

Along with all this physical joy came joys of the mind, of the artistic sense, derived from collecting and poring over numberless bicycle-catalogues till every detail of every make was branded on your memory so that you could spot them all, at sight, and were reputed wise in such-like matters as cow-horn handles,



cements, brakes, forks, bearings, and enamel. So to-day does the modest clerk send for and study auto-catalogues, till very likely he knows more about autos than the owner of two runabouts and a touring-car.

And you gave out your knowledge, too, with your school-compasses and very hard pencils (gritty) and very soft mushy lined paper, making innumerable drawings, to the last *minutiae*. These drawings you exhibited at school, where they won popularity and became, as it were, a medium of exchange with which you acquired "doggy" marbles, or hunks of only slightly-used gum, or broken clockwork.

What time you were not otherwise employed going on fool errands down to the store for a yeast-cake, or raking up leaves, or pulling chickweed, was every minute devoted to Giraffe. Much of it was, perforce, repair-work, for like Dickens' character who never had a complete suit of clothes all at one time, Giraffe never, *never*, was all sound at once from bowsprit to rudder-post. First, it was that loose pedal, then, the handle-bar, then, a broken spoke, and without cease, the tires. So you smelt perpetually of grease, and your hands were, like the Coreans'—in endless mourning.

Ah, those tires! No human force could have kept them on; that was among the categorical impossibilities. You used up endless hanks of twine, and infinitudes of rusty hay-wire; and every time, sooner or later, the string and wire would wear out, so that at full speed the tire would flop loose, bunch itself, snake-wise, 'round the forks, and hurl you from the battlements of your little heaven, like Milton's Lucifer.

There came a day of fate when Artie Bryant toolled round to your house after supper and, teetering on his safety by the fence, proposed to you the forbidden fruit of coasting the Big Hill. This Big Hill—remember?—was long and smooth and steep, with a swinging curve at the bottom; a great favorite with undertakers.

"Ma wont lemme," you weakly objected.

"Ah-h-h, she wont know! Tell 'er you's

goin' down t' the deepo' to ride 'round the square!"

"Dassent!"

"'Fraid-cat!"

"Ma, she says 'taint safe."

"Your ma ever ride a bicycle?"

This was a poser.

"N-n-no," you admitted, feeling somehow that your case was lost already.

"Well, how's she know what's safe an' what aint?"

You looked reflectively at Artie's prominent ears and tantalizing sneer, the while you admired his logic.

"Huh?" he urged.

"I don't guess she don't know—much," you had to admit, with secret joy at finding an outspoken champion of your own most inward views.

"Come on, 'Fraidy! Dare, dare, double-dare! I stump you to!"

Breathes there the boy with soul so dead who never to himself hath said: "I'll take a jawin', or get shut in the yard for a week, or have a clubbin' any old time, but I wont take a stump?" Maybe; but he doesn't live in U. S. A.; that's a fact.

So pretty soon you had sneaked Giraffe out the back way and had wobbled off to meet Artie "over on the Avenoo," where you found him ululating shrilly to himself in the Swiss yodel-fashion of boys, at the same time cutting double-circles on his safety under the arc-light, his object being to see how many scorched bugs he could squish at every gyration.

IV.

"Here goes!" exulted Artie, as you topped the rise at the first long slope of the Big Hill and gazed with fearful awe at the void beneath. He hoisted his feet to the coasters of his machine, hunched his shoulders, and with whirling pedals, shot away from you in the gloom.

"'Fraid-cat if you don't foller," his jeer trailed back at you; and mother's prohibition melted like wax on a red-hot shovel.

You gulped with fear—fear of the Big Hill and keener fear of being stumped. Far away below you winked and beck-

oned the electric-lights of Allston; the macadamized road slanted down, a grayish blur, a horrible danger to be met and conquered at all hazards on that rickety two-story bicycle, lest it be said of you (perhaps in the Lady Blanche's hearing): "He took a dare!"

You swallowed the fear-lump in your throat, or tried to; gripped the wabbly handles of Giraffe, headed the machine down-hill and, heart-sick, stomach-sick with agonized despair, let 'er go.

She went, too. No trouble about that. First thing you knew she was going like sixty, with probabilities of about a million ahead. The night-air swooped up into your pale little face, all hard-set with sudden terror, with feverish striving as you fought back the resistless circling of the pedals which, swifter now and ever swifter, racked themselves with gyroscopic whirlings. Then suddenly you lost the pedals entirely, and knew that you were swooping like a comet, high on the seat of a runaway. Flying gravel tingled your cheeks; your eyes filled with dust as they fixed themselves in a wide stare of fear at the up-rushing road. Wise had you been, oh Boy, to have wrenched Giraffe aside even then onto the soft roadside turf; but no, no—that dare!—and beside, panic had bereft you of what little reason the dare-obsession had spared. So you only gripped the handle-bar more starkly, striving now merely to keep your flying wheel to the gray ribbon that was whirling up against you.

Came a sudden drop in the road; the electric-lights sank behind foliage, and all was speed, speed, speed—humming air that bit and stung—blind, deaf terror—a dream, a dream—in which a mad wheel leaped and bounded, thrashing, dashing, with a helpless, bloodless, fear-numb rider at its mercy! No sensation now save the hand-grips, the wrenching



at the handles, the *zoon-zoon-zooning* of meteoric spokes, the slash of a resistless wind which seemed to have had no beginning, which promised never to have an end. Reality was gone; it was a dream—a dream—and mother's face was in the midst of it, kindly, entreatingly. Then, a rattling crash, a disembodied flinging down through space, and the Night rose up all about you, broke into creaming spectra, took you to its silence, and the bosom of its dark—

"Say, wipe that blood off, so!" a voice was saying, and another answered:

"Might 'a' broke his neck, by gary! But it's only his arm, I reckon. This here on the chin aint nothin' but a flesh-wound. Tooth, you say? That's right; broke clean off! Poor little kid! Nervy, all right, I swow!"

First voice again: "Might 'a' made it, too, if it hadn't 'a' been that fresh broken stone at the bottom. That was what dished 'im—that an' his handle-bar comin' out on one side, wrenched clean off where he pulled it!—We gotta git him home, *somehow*!"



You held perpetual court. Teacher came

Was it You who listened? Who could say? There were voices and there was a light, also something like cold water dashed on the consciousness that heard the voices and perceived the light; there was a numb sensation of an awful, nascent, agony of pain. But beyond this, was it You? Impossible to tell, impossible even to think about it; for with the very glimmer of thought and wonder all consciousness went out again, as candle-flames go out when the snuffer is put on.

You discovered eventually that it was You. Days and weeks of pain in your little bed at home taught you that lesson, with others; the surgeon and his splints and bandages and funny three-cornered embroidery-needles taught it, too. Luckily there were no lectures, no reproaches, nothing but loving kindness from Mother and from everyone. It was almost a recompense to find out, all of a sudden, how very, very much you seemed to be worth—you, the smallest, most insignificant of the family flock. Everybody was so good! When the pain was over, you developed into quite a hero, and held

perpetual court, with levees in true seigniorial fashion. "The fellers" came, with gifts like unto those of the Wise Men of Bethlehem; a stuffed parrot, some mice, a dissected locomotive, blocks, all sorts of things. Teacher came, and the minister, and even—even the Lady Blanche, with a wonderful nestful of *blanc-mange* eggs reposing on straws whereof the insides were strips of orange-peel, the outsides candied sugar. As far as A-1 miracles went, that nest was the king-pin, sure-pop!

The film is blurred and "rainy" with Time, master of all obliterators; but one scene is still vivid on the screen, with nary break or flicker. Mother, gentle, tender, unrepachable Mother is bending over you, and the room is quite dark, with only a little lamp-light from the hall; there is a buzz of voices down-stairs.

"Ma?"

"Boy?"

"What happened to Giraffe?"

"Never mind about Giraffe. Go to sleep, that's all."

"I wanna know! What happened to Giraffe?"

"Giraffe's gone."

"Fer good an' all?"

"I guess so. You know that's right, don't you?"

Long pause, while you thought it out quite carefully.

"Uh-huh, that's right. Say, Ma?"

"Well?"

"I wanna ast you a question!"

"What is it, dear?" Her tone spoke clearly of the longed-for heart-to-heart confession, repentance, promise-never-to-do-it-again, which now she felt with her Mother's instinct was to come.

"Put y'r ear down clost, so's I c'n whisper it. That's right! Say!"

"Well?" She cuddled you in her strong arms, got you close to her mother-heart, waited for the tears and overflow of your chastened soul. Tremulously you whispered:

"I didn't after all, did I?"

"Didn't what, dearie?"

"Git stumped! Did I, ma?"

Why didn't the answer come? Was Mother laughing, or crying, or was it both? Who shall say? At any rate, there

were tears on your face, and they weren't yours, that's certain. At last Mother answered, in a funny kind of voice, half-choking-like:

"No, dear, you didn't, and it was very, very wrong, and yet—somehow—I"—

"What, Ma?"

"There, there, don't ask me any more questions to-night! Kiss me, and go to sleep. We'll talk it all over to-morrow."

"G'-night, Ma!"

"Good-night, Boy!"

Then she kissed you, three, four times; and you gave her a skimpy little peck, boy-fashion; then she was gone. You heard her footfall on the stairs, the swish of her skirt.

You wondered, won-dered, won-der-ed—but o-oh my—how sleepy you were! So sleepy that pretty soon you had forgotten to wonder at all, but were fast asleep, clutching a leg of the stuffed parrot in one hand.

Beside you on your sick-table, the *blanc-mange* eggs reposed in their miraculous basket of orange-peel-and-sugar straw.



"Mother bending over you"—

The Meddlesome Old Gentleman

BY ELIZABETH NEWFORT HEPBURN

Author of "The Incalculable Element," etc

I.

THE little old gentleman raised himself on his elbow. His wrinkled, lean face was flushed with excitement, his dark eyes glittered. Against the white bed-linen his sensitive hands, almost as white, trembled with nervous irritability.

"I tell you, she's sick," he snapped. "She's been sick for twenty-four hours. She ought to've gone off duty last night!"

The superintendent of the nurses' training-school, competent, reticent, somewhat cold, looked at the little old gentleman with an expression as near amazement as her habitual placidity would allow. The frosty courtesy of her voice and manner would have frozen any one of the fifty girls in the training-school, but the little old gentleman refused to congeal, and after a moment of uncharacteristic hesitation she condescended to explain the situation.

"You see, Mr. Dallin, my representative, the head night-nurse, has charge of the nurses from 7 P. M. until 7 A. M. If Miss Gray was ill, all she had to do was to tell Miss Hickey and she would have been relieved from duty and another nurse put on the ward."

"She did tell Miss Hickey; that's exactly my point," said the old man, still a little belligerently. "And your august representative ordered the child to gargle her throat and keep on working! Result, she came on duty again to-night looking about as buxom as a wraith. And it's not cheerful having a ghost giving you nourishment in the middle of the night! What she needs is one of your young doctor's professional attentions and to go to bed—And then I'd like that brown eyed South Carolina girl to wait on me. Those two nurses are the best you have in this hospital!"

Miss Rainer had not lived thirty-nine

years in a militant universe without having learned that to argue with a patient is both undignified and futile. Moreover, she was conscious of admiration for the old gentleman. Meddlesome he surely was, but of all the patients in the hospital he was the only one who could never be drawn into a discussion of his own ailments. This eccentricity was the more remarkable since he was slowly succumbing to a disease painful beyond the possibility of realization, save by such as experience it.

Miss Rainer looked down at the little figure with a smile which had in it an amazing tolerance, even a touch of tenderness.

"I promise you I will look into the matter, Mr. Dallin. And I hope you will have a comfortable sleep. Good-night."

The door closed behind her. As the light, firm, footfalls receded down the corridor the tense, old face relaxed. It could hardly grow more pale, but the fire in the eyes flared out, slowly, deep lines furrowed the brow, his hands clutched each other spasmodically. In the silence of the great building, in his lonely, impersonal room, one of the cheaper, private rooms of the Ruth Hospital, he grappled fiercely with his enemy!

It was nearly an hour later that his ear detected a familiar step in the corridor, and the drawn face took on a semblance of cheerfulness. The door opened noiselessly, after the light knock, and a young woman entered the room, a girl, broad shouldered, long limbed, with a clean brown skin through which healthy color glowed, and warm brown hair, and frank, far-apart, very dark eyes. She wore the blue and white uniform of the training-school with an air at once patriotic and un-self-conscious, which would have graced velvet. As she came to the bedside, her keen glance noted the devas-

tation of the past hour as unerringly as if he had cried out instead of turning upon her that curious, twisted smile. But she spoke impersonally in her sweet, even voice.

"Mr. Dallin, it is all right; Miss Gray has gone to bed and I'm in charge. And she asked me to thank you for speaking to Miss Rainer."

He laughed, a painful, grim laugh, but there was real humor in his eyes.

"So the Queen called down the old cat, did she? Well, it's time!"

The girl stood close beside the bed and laid her strong, young hand on the hand of the patient, but she did not otherwise express the sympathy she knew he hated put into words.

"The old cat isn't so bad, Mr. Dallin. I know you dislike her, and perhaps she doesn't mind being a sneak, as she ought to mind! But she has all sorts of women to watch here, some of them as irresponsible as girls at boarding-school."

"So you defend spies," snarled the old gentleman.

But he watched her with an affectionate gleam of interest, even tenderness, while suddenly he twisted the conversation into a new channel.

"How did that young Hilton come on with his operation? Did he win out, or botch things?"

The girl busied herself bringing the tumbled bedclothes into a state of prim order. But to the keen eyes watching her the color in her smooth cheeks seemed to deepen.

"I believe Dr. Hilton did very well, indeed. In fact, the nurse in charge says Dr. Crumpacker told the superintendent he had never seen a prettier operation."

"Which means, of course, that the poor devil of a patient will die, successful operations being particularly successful when the patient is removed to a higher sphere!"

Miss Marion Rhett laughed, a sweet, throaty laugh. "Really, Mr. Dallin, they believe this patient will get well!"

Then something in Dallin's face undermined her hard-won self-control, and she dropped on her knees beside the bed.

"You poor, brave dear!"

It was almost a sob, but in a moment

she was on her feet and down the corridor. She came back carrying a tray on which were a bowl of soup and a little phial and medicine-glass. But his old arm waved her away.

"The soup, but not that beastly stuff; I will not take it!"

"Dr. Hilton ordered it for times like this. It will help you, Mr. Dallin."

"Do you know that I was once a drunkard; that until I came to this hospital I had not touched alcohol in any form for more than twenty years?"

"But the doctors know that, and they think it can't matter now. It is the one thing that helps you to get to sleep when you are suffering like this, without affecting your heart."

She put the tray across the bed, and after he had drunk the soup slowly and painfully she poured the liquor into the glass. He looked at it, then into the girl's sweet, pitiful eyes. She answered his unspoken question.

"Yes, Mr. Dallin, I understand. Dr. Hilton told me you promised your wife never to touch it, but I believe she would release you from that promise, and that somewhere, somehow, she knows and understands."

He took the glass and drank, and at midnight, as she finished her rounds at his room, she found him asleep, his gray head resting against his arm, about his whole person the pathetic simplicity of a child exhausted with pain or sorrow.

Marion Rhett stood and studied the face in the faint glow of the night-light.

"His wife has been dead twenty years; he is old and ill and poor and alone. But he loves her yet, he never forgets her, she still shapes his real life!"

In the girl's eyes there were tears, even while her lip twitched with disdain of herself, of her envy of him—also perhaps of the facile loves of young men she had known.

II.

As he made his early morning rounds, Dr. Roger Hilton, senior interne of the Ruth Hospital, was conscious of most unprofessional awkwardness. He was turning a corner in the corridor of Ward

Five when he very nearly collided with a nurse carrying a breakfast-tray. She stepped aside in time, but the young physician's face was aflame from chin to brow.

"I beg your pardon, Miss Rhett! It was frightfully awkward of me!"

The girl smiled. Not a nurse in the training-school but reveled in the fact that this great, six foot man could be made to flush like a woman. But if he was blonde and blue eyed and quick blooded he was also muscular and virile enough for the most exacting taste. Marion Rhett, worn by her long night on duty among the ill and the ugly was doubly conscious of the charm of this clean cut, fresh colored youth in his immaculate white linen. She was rather given to doing or saying the unexpected when it pleased her, and she surprised Hilton now by the most personal speech she had made him in months, and Miss Rhett was not given to personalities.

"I'll forgive you, doctor, because you look so healthy that the sight of you in this place is restful!"

She walked on with her long, swift step, and for a moment it looked as if he were going to follow her. Voices down the corridor proclaimed the approach of two other nurses, and, instead, he proceeded rapidly on his way to Room Eleven.

"Well, Mr. Dallin, how goes it?"

The ill old man looked up at the young man with eyes brightened a little by the blessed relief of sleep. He nodded emphatically without answering the doctor's question in words, as if he scorned such a commonplace as health, or the lack of it; what he said was,

"You just met her in the hall, didn't you, doctor?"

"You have had some seventeen nurses in the past two months, Mr. Dallin, but I believe 'her' refers to Miss Rhett!"

"Miss Rhett is the sort of a girl who is 'her' to a good many men!" Then, irritably, "Do leave my pulse alone, Hilton. This tinkering with worn-out machines is imbecile!"

Imperturbably the young man took a thermometer from its glass of disinfect-

ant and effectively sidetracked further remarks for some minutes. The obstruction removed, the patient spat out his scorn.

"These machines of yours are the most infernal frauds! Some of them register three degrees higher than others, and yet you regard them as conclusive! And the nurses! The other day one of the 'probes' took my temperature just after I had demolished a bowl-full of hot soup! She nearly fainted when she read the thermometer."

Hilton laughed. "Did you tell her?"

"Certainly not. She was one of the cocksure kind who looks upon old men and sick people as absolutely *non compos mentis*! And she registered it solemnly on the chart, little fool! Now, Miss Rhett wouldn't have done that in her kindergarten days! That girl has not only a complexion and a figure—the sort of figure even those absurd uniforms can't spoil—but she also has brains. Some of them have nothing but pompadours!"

"Too true," said the doctor sententiously.

Then his voice fell.

"Now, Mr. Dallin, you have been having a bad time lately, and there is no chance of your getting much better, as you know. I haven't ordered a special nurse for you hitherto, but now you need even care."

The wrinkled brow furrowed itself into still finer lines.

"Can't afford luxuries, doctor. This room is all I can manage."

"I understand that. But we are allowed to keep the same nurses in charge when necessary, instead of changing them constantly for the sake of their wider experience. And I'll try to arrange to keep Miss Rhett steadily on your case, to alternate with Miss Gray, since I know your preferences, and also because they both understand the treatment."

"Thank you, doctor!" And the old gentleman's tone was anything but perfunctory. "The variety was entertaining at first, but I think I must be passing the stage where variety helps. That Miss Gray is a nice girl, and capable. But if I were a young man, like you, I'd marry Miss Rhett!"

Hilton was conscious of the half-humorous scrutiny of the keen eyes, and again he felt himself flushing, in the womanish fashion he loathed. But something in the old man's inextinguishable interest in the lives about him while he trod so bravely the road of his inevitable pain warmed one to admiration. The young doctor's honest, boyish smile did not diminish the effect of earnestness as he said slowly, "If you were a young man I should envy you—if you were not like me!"

There was uneasiness in the old gentleman's manner as he studied the clean, strong face before him.

"Don't tell me that a man who looks as you look has no right to think of marriage."

But the blue eyes held his own fearlessly. "It's only a question of money. I can't marry for years, however I may wish to marry."

"Money!"

There was disdain in the word and yet a tightening of the lips, as if the meddlesome old gentleman had himself comprehended the bitterness of money-need. But he was intent upon the vigor of the youngster before him, his look of flawless health, of splendid staying power.

"Why should a man like you need more money than he can make?" he said.

"Professional success comes slowly," replied Roger. "But if that were all, you are certainly right, Mr. Dallin."

The older man's expression invited further confidence, and Hilton went on with a sense of his unusual and yet comforting expansiveness concerning his own affairs.

"The trouble is I am heavily in debt. I owe for my education," he said. "My father and mother were both dead by the time I was seventeen. I wanted to be a surgeon, but I had no money. So for five years I worked in a Wall Street brokerage-house, studying at night-school, saving every penny I could, although that was little enough. I wanted to go to Johns Hopkins; I wanted the best, and it would take a lifetime of my poor little savings. So I got reckless. The 'Street' got into my blood, and I bought stock on a margin, trusting to what I regarded as inside in-

formation! In a week I was cleaned out, every penny gone.

"I was twenty-two then, and things looked pretty hopeless. But through a fellow clerk my employer heard my story, and he offered to lend me three thousand dollars, with no security beyond my personal note, and at a very low rate of interest. I accepted, and am now almost through the six years of university work and my internship here. But even with the best of luck, after I begin practising you can see that I shall be far over the edge of thirty before I am out of debt. And for an untried man, with his future mortgaged, to consider marriage—well, you see what a cad I should be to ask any girl!"

The old gentleman nodded. "Yes!" he acknowledged. "You are probably right. But I had built an ornate little romance about you two, and I am sorry."

There was a silence, while the old man looked from his narrow white bed at the early Spring-green of the hospital grounds, and the young man looked at the picture of a girl, etched perpetually against the background of his waking thoughts and of his happier dreams.

The old man spoke at last, reminiscently, giving confidence for confidence.

"For twenty years I've been a rusty old derelict of manhood—ambition forgotten, health shattered, money wasted. But there were two years in my early forties when I lived. Only it should have been sooner. I am a Southerner, a Virginian, and as a young man I drank too much, like so many of my generation. My work suffered—I was an engineer; but though I went through 'Tech' with honors I never got to be an A1 man, perhaps because from the beginning I stunted my professional growth by the periodical spree so fatal to steady employment."

His face changed subtly from its half-contemptuous expression of rigid self-analysis to a curious, shaded brightness.

"Then I met Her, the only woman who ever counted for two consecutive days in my life. And I had the sense to love her from the day I laid eyes on her. But she wouldn't marry me for eleven years, because she said I didn't love her

enough. You see, she was the kind of woman who doesn't believe in post-nuptial reformations. When I was over forty I concentrated all my broken powers of will, and won out, more or less shattered in health, but sane at last. I didn't touch alcohol for two years, and she married me. But she was a frail creature, physically, though her will was like iron! And she was only a year or two younger than I. Twenty months after our wedding-day she died, and the—little fellow—died, too—You see what a long wait meant, in one instance."

The strong, sensitive, hand of the young man grasped the old hand for a moment. But it seemed to Hilton that speech would have been a sacrilege.

III.

It had been one of his worst nights, and Marion Rhett, as she watched his battle for self-control, felt that the little old gentleman in No. 11 was a hero worth all the concentrated pain of her long vigil. He looked up at her in a moment of respite.

"This etiquette of doctors and nurses is a queer thing! All of you know I've got to die, yet you are forcing me to live just as long as I have the strength to endure life! And if you, kind little girl that you are, were to give me some painless anodyne, they would put you on trial for your life, after I was comfortably at rest!"

Her fresh color was quite gone, yet her voice had its resolute cheerfulness.

"They certainly would, Mr. Dallin! And after all, between the acts, you still have the capacity to enjoy, though I don't understand why!"

"I enjoy looking at *you*," replied the old gentleman. "And I like hearing Miss Gray's latest yarn about the 'old cat'! And sometimes I like just to lie and remember."

The girl was sitting by him, her fingers interlaced, the long lines and delicate curves of her body relaxing for the moment from the strain of service. In her dark eyes there was an expression daughterly and tender.

"Mr. Dallin, I wonder if you will care to know how very much you have helped me!"

"I help you! Why, child, my long dying has been slow torture for you! You have grown thin under it, for the queer thing is that you care for me a little."

"Not 'a little,'" said Marion.

He sighed whimsically. "After all these years, to have a woman living, who cares for me. But it's only been won by dying."

The girl laid her hand on his. "I was a coward, an ingrate, until I knew you! I have had magnificent health always, and I never stopped to be thankful for it, until now. I have been what boys call 'a kicker.' I've wanted everything in my life different. I have wanted to loaf and wear beautiful clothes and play the game of the old-fashioned woman as my grandmother played it, with men and money and admiration and protection from the crudenesses and roughnesses of life! Sometimes I have even hated my work—utterly!"

"If you have hated your work you deserve some credit for doing it so well," said the old man dryly. "And if you have hungered after admiration it seems queer that you should have avoided all unnecessary dealings with these young doctors, some of them attractive, too!"

"Oh, I have my pride. If one must work it's only decent to do one's level best. And about the doctors. There are too many underbred girls in a place like this not to make one revel in just being a lady! And a lady doesn't mix her business and personal relations!"

The old man smiled. "Can a lady regulate her heart as perfectly as she regulates her manners, my dear?"

Instantly he saw that he had blundered. A wave of confusion went over the girl, like some palpable thing. He saw that her eyes were full of uncontrollable tears.

"My dear, I beg your pardon!"

Never had the little old gentleman spoken so tenderly; his whole pain-racked body slrank from the mortification of having wounded her. She laughed over at him bravely, her hands on her hot cheeks.

"I am a little fool, Mr. Dallin! Truly, it doesn't matter; there's no one else in the world I should mind so little—knowing."

The old gentleman recaptured one of her hands.

"And it's only the meddlesome old gentleman! I know what they call me!" Then he added very gently. "Never be content with a makeshift, my dear! Take the real thing, or nothing. I've only done two things in my life that I planned to do—I mean things of any importance. But I have come to know that the memory of a great love is the best memory a human soul can have. However brief its happiness or tragic its climax, such a love is the one thing that gives dignity to life, in the face of death!"

She looked at him with her direct, childlike glance. "I had meant to belittle it, to conquer it, to forget it!" She might have been a little girl confessing some childish naughtiness. "Oh, Mr. Dallin, it hurts so, to care and not be certain that the other person cares!"

He kissed her hand, with a touch of an old-fashioned, exquisite chivalry, and a sympathy which could not wound her.

"Child, love is the one thing of which a human soul need never be ashamed."

And after awhile, perhaps because their talk had for the time conquered the insistent effort of his body to wear out his spirit, the little old gentleman fell asleep.

IV.

When the end came, almost a month later, and the little old gentleman went gladly and peacefully into the undiscovered country, Marion Rhett experienced the keenest sorrow she had known since childhood. So far as relatives were concerned she was curiously alone, and for a brief space the old gentleman, whose spirit was yet so bravely young, had seemed almost to suggest the father she barely remembered. Few of her patients had hitherto attracted her beyond a purely professional enthusiasm, for by nature she was reserved, and this reserve lent to her manner an aloofness which was usually attributed to indifference. Except

for Evelyn Gray, she knew the girls at the training-school only in a surface fashion, and at this time Evelyn, for whom she really cared, was called home to Canada by her mother's illness.

She was usually too healthy and far too busy for morbid introspection, but as she went out to the little city park on the side of a New England hill one May afternoon, she had a sense of loneliness strangely at odds with the radiant gladness of the day.

Loneliness! To the girl almost any crime seemed excusable as a result of this sense of desolation which seemed to engulf her; she was conscious of considering calmly whether what the French call "crimes of passion" could be half so forgivable as some mad act resultant upon a mood like this, an utter desolation in a world of happy people to whom one is alien and unlovable.

She passed babies, pink and laughing, with their nurses or proud young mothers; a dear, masculine, small creature in funny blue overalls almost tripped her up with the top he was spinning with lawless glee exactly in the middle of the walk.

At last she left them behind her and walked down a narrow path between a tall hedge of budding lilacs. But even here she was not to find the solitude she craved. A tall young man came toward her down the path, reading a letter as he walked. It was Roger Hilton. He looked up suddenly and saw her, as she stood poised for flight. For in this mood the young doctor was the one person on earth whom she wished most to avoid!

But he came rapidly toward her; it was too late to retreat. Against the vivid green and faint purples of the hedge the warm tones of his splendid coloring stood in bold relief. To the girl he seemed beautiful with the large beauty which only belongs to strength, and youth, and virile purity. But to her amazement his face had a new look, a boyish radiance and triumph which seemed in some way personal to her.

"Marion!"

Her pride took fire instantly. She had been so sure, during this last six months

of her work in the hospital, that after their pleasant friendship of the first year, he had secretly, but none the less deliberately avoided her, and that many times. But now he was eager, courteous, insistent.

"I want very much to speak to you a moment. I have something to show you."

Her desire to fly had vanished, leaving in its place a sudden weakness, almost physical rather than wholly of the heart. It was as if she had, stumbling, come suddenly upon the edge of an abyss of terrifying depth and blackly ominous. But if Hilton saw all this in her upturned face he gave no sign. None of the light went out of his eager eyes as he looked down into hers, low burning.

He led her to a bench at the end of the path, and then put the letter into her hand.

"Please read it; it concerns you very closely," he said.

She took it. There was fine, old-fashioned writing on three sides of the folded sheet in the hand of the little old gentleman.

MY DEAR HILTON,

I am very glad that you told me what you did about your private life, and I know that it was possible for you to tell me because I, too, had loved, and because you believed me poor, unable to turn any insight of your affairs into an excuse for helping you. But when you receive this I shall be gone, and curiously enough, no longer quite penniless! For, since my wife's death, although I have had no one dependent upon me, I have continued to pay the small life-insurance premium begun at the time of my marriage.

Somehow it seemed to me that, although I was alone, in the course of my work, a wanderer over the earth, I might some day be glad to leave behind me a little money. I even thought that it might possibly help some man and woman to a happiness like mine, mine absolutely, although for so brief a span!

And because I have found you and Marion and have learned that you care

for each other I shall take the out-trail more content to have lived twenty years too long!

I am mailing this to my lawyer that he may forward it to you at the proper season. The insurance-fund will very little more than pay your indebtedness, but I know you well enough to appreciate that you will infinitely prefer to prepare a home for your wife out of the strength of your own brain and body! May God give you the love you desire and which I believe you can requite by an equal love such as too few men can give to the women they marry. Yet, if love be love, it can cleanse as fire cleanses, and endure to the end!

Your Marion kissed me to-night, and her touch is a source of strength; she has made it possible for me to write this letter.

Her friend and yours,

"The Meddlesome Old Gentleman,"

EDWARD DALLIN.

She dropped the letter. Her hot tears were wetting her veil, and she dragged it off impatiently. She wanted the air and sunshine warm against her face.

Hilton laid his hand on hers.

"Marion, before this came I dared not believe I was ever in your thoughts! Yet perhaps he was mistaken—"

She flung her hands out with a gesture which was at once passionate and curiously conclusive.

"And that was all—a matter of money! Oh, don't you realize that a woman like me would willingly wait a lifetime, if she only knows!"

His whole aspect had the radiance of unlooked-for fruition. As the girl looked into his happy eyes through a blur of sunlight and misty tears she laid her hand in his. Her voice was low and sweet.

"We owe it to him, to the little old gentleman. Oh, are you sure, quite sure, you can love me as he loved his wife? That after half a lifetime of loneliness and sorrow you could love me still!"

"Yes," he answered, "yes."

The Kidnaping of Rudolph Nothing

BY PORTER EMERSON BROWNE

Author of "Daly, the Troubadour," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY DAVID ROBINSON

HE (for I mention no names) told me this story one night while under the influence of an attentive ear, an attentive waiter, and the recollections of sundry other judiciously betrayed and unbetrusted confidences.

"For," he said, "I don't care what you tell, so long as there aint no uncomfortable come-backs to the same."

To this there are none. He began by making significant signs to the waiter to relieve himself of all responsibility in that which was about to be consummated.

I had just begun to take my annual vacation from dear old Sing Sing, and things wasn't looking as roseate with me as they might. In short, my position was somewhat sim'lar to that of a peace-congresser in a Black Hand Conclave. Me and money was strangers; so much so that even the Injun on a measly little copper cent would bristle up his feathers and dust at the mere sight of me coming down the line.

An era of reform had hit the blooming metrollerpus, and it had hit it so hard that even a seventy-five per cent. dividend on a pocket-picking found the police cold and unresponsive. It was certainly a chill and warmthless welcome that awaited me as I left the Old Homestead up river and come ambling blithesomely down to the haunts of men.

I soon see that it was to be the country



Rudolph

for mine, if I wanted my vacation to assume its usual dimensions. So I hiked over to Long Island and set out paddling along that glorious near-suburb.

I was walking along through the freight-yards when, suddenly, I heard a train coming; and to keep from getting run over, I boarded it. It was a freight; and I soon found out that the only possible way in which it could have run over me would have been for me to lay down on the tracks and tie myself so I

couldn't roll. However, it promised to be a better means of locomotion than walking, so I stayed with it.

But it didn't keep its promise; and about noon, being in a hurry, I got out and walked; and besides, the peculiar motion of the equipage had almost give me bone-spavins and locomotive attacks-yer.

The reaction of that journey was such that, along about three o'clock in the afternoon, I set down to rest under one of them Long Island trees of the size that would make the average umbrella look like a circus-tent. But by changing my position every five minutes, I managed to keep one eye in the shade.

Across from where I was layin' there stood one of these big, able-bodied looking shacks of the kind that millionaires builds to keep their servants from getting lonesome. It had a couple of billion square feet of lawn in front, shaved down to the quick, with flower-beds scattered around on it and, when I laid down under my toadstool, there wasn't a soul in sight eggscept, way off in the distance, a groom who was manicuring the feet of one of them bob-tailed, ewe-necked skates, like a cross between a giraffe and a hobby horse, that no one but them society-guys would be seen with.

I guess I must 'a' drowsed off; because when I again looked at the house, the front yard, which had before been as deserted as a Republican mass-meeting at Tammany Hall, was decorated with a couple of kids. One of 'em was adorned like unto the Auroarer Borealis, with a red coat and white pants and one of them patent leather lids and stockings, like men's socks, known to *savants* as "The Mosquitoes' Friend." The other was just a plain kid. His clothes wasn't worth mention. As a sartorial eggshibit he was a plain, unequivocal frost.

Now, both of these juveniles was plentifully saturated with dirt and dead leaves, because they was digging in a flower-bed in a way that would have made a terrier after a bone seem lackadaisical and inert. And the way they tore off the face of nature was something calculated to put an indolent-minded gent into the psychopathic-ward.

Opportunity, so some wise guy has said, knocks on every man's door once. It didn't take no clairvoyant to tell me, as I gazed on that Christmas-tree kid, that here she was yammering on mine till she was like to bust a blood-vessel. But then, she had knocked before, you know, and when I had gone to meet her, polite as an amachure congressman, with my lid in my fist, to answer her summons, she had fetched me a wallop under the ear that had landed me back in my up-river home. Hence, was I some chary of her favors.

But I kep' watching this shining eggs-ample of juvenile sartorials, and Opportunity kept knocking harder and harder; and byme-by I made up my mind I'd just have to get up and oblige her.

So I waltzed over to the edge of the yard and sidled up to them kids with all the subtle ingratiating of the president of a Standard Oil college in the presence of the founders.

"Hello, kids," I says, benignantly, "what're you doing?"

"Digging," says the ornate yooth, "Wha'd' you think we was doing—frying aigs?"

"He sure has all the charming culture and winning manners of the aristocracy, all right," says I to myself. And then to the kids, I says, "Do you want some candy?"

The way them kids answers my summons and comes charging toward me would have made Napoleon's rough-riders at Bally-what-do-you-call-it look like a bunch of bridle-path bouncers. They just naturally flew.

"Hold on, there," says I. "One at a time, please. I aint no candy-trust."

I turns to the plain kid, him being, as you no doubt surmise, emphatically *persona non grata*. "Your friend to-day," I says, "you to-morrer."

The kid began to howl. And at that I sees the only thing for me to do is to grab the other kid and do a Eliza-crossing-the-ice. Accordingly, I does it.

The kid that I has in my arms seems peaceable and contented enough, and as I puts in my best licks, he encourages me with delighted chirps. And along behind us comes pounding this other yooth,



"I explain to a few good ladies that he's my sister's child"

yowling and yelping like a hound after a ferocious and elusive anise-seed bag.

I puts my best foot forward and my second best foot a little ahead of that, and we does an Empire State Express along that road that would have reflected credit on any college-bred jack-rabbit from Dan to Beersheba. But that kid behind us was certainly the original Maud S. The way he made the dust fly would have fretted that guy that did the Marathon specialty into an early decline. The Vanderbilt cup-race was a May-pole dance compared to that foot-loose juvenile.

Not being used to such violent eggscercise, I begins to get winded and to falter in my gait. Whereat, this eager and eggscited kid I'm playing perambulator

for, gets annoyed at my seeming slothfulness and begins to clump me under the ear with a ham-bone he's excavated from amid the ruins of that flower-bed.

I begins to appreciate that my position is getting somewhat precarious. I'm panting like a dying fish and the finish-line is nowhere in sight; and, meanwhile, this kid, pounding along behind, refuses to be distanced, and his bell-like yawps rends the fragrant Summer-air something scandalous. I loses my patience.

"Git out o' here!" I yells pantingly, at the pursooing yooth. "G'wan home, you!" and I turns suddenly, and charges him.

This bellicose move on my part for the moment completely disintegrates the enthusiasm of the pursooing child and he

backs-water till the street's all churned up. However, no sooner am I under full speed ahead again than he is once more steaming along behind under forced draught with his whistle tooting like he was going to blow the end out.

Whereat I repeats my maneuver. And in my surging anger I'm so lost to all sense of shame that I almost plants a vindictive No. 10 upon the most adjacent part of this kid's anatomy as he turns and rounds away for the retreat.

This savage and terrifying move of mine thoroughly discourages the pursuooing yooth, and with a series of G-sharp yelps, he turns tail and scoots for home, hitting the high places and that's all. I quiets down, quick.

As I begins again to pay some attention to the speed ord'nances, this kid that I'm carrying, and who seems to have been thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the chase, becomes fretful and peevish. Evidently he's accustomed, thinks I, to a fast life. I presumes he's had a French tooring-car for a baby-carriage, and that any speed less than a hundred mile a hour seems like a slow and somnolent dawdle.

"Run!" he exhorts me, with a clip of the ham-bone. "Get a move on! This aint no funeral!"

Despite the discomfort of the caress, I am delighted.

"*Noblesse oblige*," I says to myself. He sure is of the *beau-Monday*, accustomed to have his every wish, even though it sends his inferiors into galloping consumption or the police-court. But I therewith curtails the respect that I, of the masses, must feel for him, of the classes, long enough to pry him and the ham-bone apart and throw the latter into the ditch.

Well, to make a long story short, I gets away with this kid. I may as well admit that it is much to my surprise that I does so; for I sees by all evidence at hand that his folks is people of wealth and standing and that, therefore, the police wont be as supine as usual.

If you kidnaps a poor kid, everyone says, "Oh, well! His folks oughter 'a' been more careful." But when you kidnaps a rich one, people is plenty agitated;

for I find that money has a lot to do with the eggscitation of our sympathies.

I has enough capital to get passage on the ferry; and on the ferry, by great good luck, I manages to get enough to carry us to a safe place in the Ramapo mountains where, in other days, me and Red Eyed Maginnis used to manufacture near-money for the bucolic trade.

And the kid don't make no trouble. He's maybe six or seven years old and, after excavating his face, I finds that he has red hair and freckles that would make sun-spots look like molecules. And aside from having to eggsplain to a few nosey old ladies that he is my sister's child who I am taking to her death-bed in Pompton, N. J., (and in all them fabrications the juvenile backs me up in a manner that surprises me) I don't have no trouble.

Once back in the silent glades of the mountains, I takes a few days off to roominate.

"I better let things stand in *statue quo*," I advises myself, "for a few days, at least, until they begin to get het up. Then I'll spring them customary financial demands for the return of their beloved progeny."

So me and the kid subsides to the simple life.

I finds this kid docile to a degree; and also surprising wise for one of his years and past condition of servitood. He bunks in with me nights as comfortable and sociable as a kitten under a stove; and he spends his days setting on the bank of the creek, ketching horn-pouts with a bent pin on a line. He is sure having the time of his life. I locks him into the cabin when I goes down to the village to buy supplies; but I don't never recollect that I locks him in successful. When I comes back, he's always settin' there fishing. But as they aint nobody much in them parts, and as he don't never stray none, this don't worry me much.

Along about the end of a week or so, when I assumes that his folks is sufficiently worried and tearing the country all apart in their efforts to find their missing progeny, I sets down to write a letter to his payments.

The kid is setting at the other side of

the fire, eyeing me with mild and unobtrusive interest.

"Say, kid," I says to him, as I sharpens my pencil, and otherwise prepares for the agonies of composition, "what's your name?"

"Rudolph," he says, obliging as you please.

"Rudolph what?" says I.

"Rudolph nothing," says he. "Just Rudolph."

"But you must have another name," I protests.

"Why?" says he, batting a wondering eye.

"Because it's the custom of civilization," I says; "and people of your station in life gen'rally gives their yooth seven or eight."

I can see that to Rudolph this arrant profligacy of nomenclature seems a heap useless. But he don't say nothing. He's a quiet little cuss.

"What your father's name?" I says, pursuoing a new line of investigation.

Rudolph shakes his head. "I d' know."

"Don't know your father's name?" I says, surprised out of my usual *sang froid*.

"No," says Rudolph, calm as eggs.

"Your mother's, then?" I says, helplessly.

Again Rudolph shakes his head. He is, I can see, becoming somewhat aweary of the third degree.

"But," I says, protestingly, "but"—

"Forget it," says Rudolph, rising to his youthful feet. "Let's go fishing."

We goes.

All that afternoon, me and Rudolph sets side by side on the bank of the creek, fishing. I organizes a little down-stream from Rudolph and there's a bush between us. So whenever I ketches a fish, I leans over and, while he aint looking, I snakes his line in and puts my fish on his hook and then slides it back into the water again. And the number of pouts that Rudolph hauls in that day would have made Grover Cleveland turn the color of his front yard. And Rudolph is sure the most joyous juvenile you ever see. He sets there chirping away whenever he pulls in a fish, and he's that happy he like to bust a lung.

But the best part of the fishing, with Rudolph, is to watch the fishes when he puts 'em back into the water again. What? Sure we do. We put back—or, rather, Rudolph puts back—all we don't need to eat. In that way he gets twice as much fun out of fishing as anyone I ever see. It's fun to pull 'em out. It's fun to put 'em back. And as Rudolph sets up there with his heels tucked into the edge of the bank, he sure seems to have a corner on happiness, and he aint looking for no interference from no nosey gover'ment commissions.

Along about this time I begins to get worried. I been putting off and putting off writing to Rudolph's payrents, partly because I can't find out their names and partly because Rudolph is having such a good time fishing I don't want to send him back where he can't have no pleasures but champagne-dinners and automobileels and excavating ham-bones out of flower-beds. And I don't mind adding that sometimes, when I wakes up in the night and feels Rudolph cuddling up beside me there as peaceful and contented and full of sleep as a pointer-pup in front of a fire, I gets to thinking about how it will be when he aint there no more. And I aint so cussed impetuous to get-rich-quick as I thought I'd be.

I questions Rudolph on numerous and sundry occasions, but he don't know no more than he did in the first instance; and we ends up always, like we done at first, by going fishing.

At last, thinks I, maybe a newspaper'll tell me all about Rudolph's payrentage. So I locks Rudolph in the cabin and goes trailing off down to the village, which is a little, half-horse town not on no map whatever and so sleepy that they can't tell whether it's got catalepsy or is merely dead. By some wonderful chance they happens to have there a paper that aint more'n a week old. I buys it. I looks all through it, eagerly and anxiously. But I can't find in it nothing about no kidnapping.

I must confess that it cheers me up a heap; and I goes back and finds Rudolph setting on the crick-bank, just as I expected, since I had left him locked up in the house.

After a week or so more, I goes back to the village again and buys another paper. But there aint no more in it than there was in the first. Rudolph's family, it seems, has either give up the search or they aint started it yet. So, after a mental struggle of no mean dimensions, I fin'ly decides that the only thing for me to do is to go back to the scene of Rudolph's nativity and, by judicious inquiries among the neighbors, find out who his payrents are and what their names is.

It was some days before I arrives at this state of determination. And I lays awake nights, too, a lot, getting there. It's dark in that country when night

comes—plenty dark. And I lays there, with the only light the flicker of the coals in the mud fireplace, and outside the wind roaring around the corners of the shack like it was going to tear it apart; and all around the whipping of bent boughs and the snapping of branches and the patter of twigs upon the ground. And Rudolph is all curled up alongside of me, his legs spread out comfortable and his hand lying on my neck, friendly and confident like, and his breath coming easy and quiet and slow and—well, it takes me a heap of thinking before I finally decides to go back to Rudolph's home and find out who his family is.



"Ambling blithesomely down to the haunts of men"

However, as I says, I at length gets ready to do so. I stakes Rudolph to a plentiful supply of cooked fodder and some milk, and tells him he can go fishing all he wants to but not to amble any farther off than the crick.

"Are you going away?" says Rudolph. I nods.

"How long?" matter of fact as you please.

"Oh, only a couple of days," I says.

Rudolph holds out his hand. "Well, so long," he says. "I'll miss you. So get a move on and hurry back," he says.

I shakes hands with Rudolph and he stands in the door of the shack watching me, and waving his paw to me. And the last thing I hears, as I rounds the turn of the road, is his, "So long; and get a wiggle on."

It required a heap of determination to get me down to the village, and when I gets to the station and finds there aint a train for four hours, I'm as exuberant as a kid that gets a unexpected day off. And I hurries back to the cabin to say good-by to Rudolph all over again. And it's a good thing I does.

Naturally, I expects, when I returns, to find Rudolph setting on the crick-edge pulling out horn-pouts—or putting them in again. But when I don't, you can gamble some I does a sprint for the shack that wouldn't be no disgrace to Rudolph's friend on Long Island.

I finds him at the house, sure enough. He's setting on the edge of the bed, looking peaked and white.

"What's the matter, Rudolph?" I says, and I'm some anxious and frightened; you can bet on that.

"Oh, nothing," says Rudolph. "I don't feel good; that's all."

"What's the matter?" I asks.

"Stummick-ache," says Rudolph. "And I've got a little headache, too. And I feel hot—no, I don't; I feel cold."

I sees the boy's sick; and I does a dash down to the village that smashes the international record into splinters. I finds a sleepy old doctor there and I nails him in a hurry. Didn't I know the chances I was running? Sure I did. But Rudolph was sick. You don't seem to remember that.

The Doc. hitches a imitation horse he's got into a ramshackle old buggy that seen its best days when Washington was the nation's official lie-nailer, and the way I warms up that old skate causes it to realize for the first time in twenty years that it's alive, and almost frightens the Doc. into perpetual insomnia.

Byme-by we gets there. The Doc. looks at Rudolph, and feels of his pulse and eggsamines his tongue.

"Well?" says I; and you may believe I was some anxious.

"Measles," says the Doc.

"Bad?" says I.

"Tol'able," says he, wagglng his chin-foliage.

"Will he die?" says I; and something inside of me gave me a jolt that scared me.

"I hope not," says the Doc. "Give him this medicine every hour," he says. "I'll come back to-morrer."

Course I worried a good deal, not only on account of Rudolph's measles but as well because of what the old Doc. had seen. But he was a somnolent old guy, who looked as if he didn't know a newspaper from a almanac. And so I had hopes.

The Doc. comes the next day, and the next, and the next and for many more. And I, of course, gives up all idea of my trip to Long Island and sets there alongside of Rudolph, pouring medicine into him and feeding him milk and things; and the way them horn-pouts sloshed and swoggled around in the creek was something scandalous.

Well, byme-by, me and the old Doc. and Rudolph, we gets a strangle-hold on old Mr. Measles and his shoulders on the mat and he's down and out. And then comes what the old Doc. calls Rudolph's convalescence. And all them long Summer-days I smokes my pipe in the doorway of the cabin watching Rudolph as he sets there on the edge of the bed, wropped up in a blanket, and fishes horn-pouts out of a wash-tub I has got and filled for him. I swear, if them horn-pouts don't finally get so they likes it, and early in the morning they'd be up and sloshing about, waiting for Rudolph to begin to ketch 'em.

One day I happens to notice Rudolph's underclothes, that I has just finished washing and hanged out on a line to dry. They don't look like the effete raiments of the aristocracy. No, not none, they don't. They've got patches of eighty-seven different kind onto 'em, and so many holes that Rudolph could get into 'em a different way every morning for a year.

This sets me to thinking; and byme-by I goes in and sets down alongside of Rudolph on the edge of the bed.

"Say, Grover," I says (I calls him Grover sometimes, being as he spends most of his time fishing), "who was that other kid who was with you that day I took you away?"

"Who? That kid that chases us?" asks Rudolph, slipping a pout back into the tub again.

"Sure," I says, nodding. "Who was he?"

"Oh," says Rudolph, a heap loftily, returning to his tub, "I don't know who that kid is. He lived in that big house there. Me and him changed clo'es."

I pretty near fell into the tub.

"But you!" I says. "Who are your folks?"

Rudolph eggsamined his hook care-

fully. "I aint got none," he says. "I never had none. And I don't want none—eggs—cept you," and he pulled out another pout.

Just then the old Doc. comes in. He looks Rudolph all over, up and down.

"Fine," he says. He eyes Rudolph's aquarium. "Is he fond of fishing?" he says.

I just then aint loaded to do much oratory, so I merely nods.

"Take him out to the creek," says the old Doc. "The sun'll do him a lot of good now."

And me and Rudolph goes fishing again.

He paused. I waited. And so for some moments.

At length I ventured to speak.

"But," I said. "But"—

He looked at his watch. "Gee!" he exclaimed, and rose quickly. "It's half-past eight. I gotter go."

I started. "What!" I cried. "You go at half-past eight?"

"Me and Rudolph are going back to the mountains to-morrer," he said, slowly. "So long."

And he was gone.

How Camile Paid

BY GUY NORSE ARMSTRONG

ILLUSTRATED BY ROY H. BROWN

CAMILE DESMOULINS shook his bald head until it swung on his shoulders like an inverted pendulum.

"It it not within reason that one should put money into such a place," he exclaimed, and Camile's long arms moved in unison with the rotary motion of his thinking member, he was so indignant! "Only yesterday did I not see Monsieur Thiers, squander one hundred *louis*. One hundred *louis*! Think of that! He gave it for a new overcoat that Desjardin is making him for next winter! Desjardin himself told me. And any day one can see

them—those clerks—carelessly throwing money into vaults—throw it as I do this cigaret into the street. Is that not enough?" A shrug of Camile's shoulders gave emphasis to his words. "You ask me to trust my money to them. Bah!"

With a grandiloquent wave of his hand that might have served for a signal for the removal from the boulevard of the magnificent bank-building before which they stood, Camile dismissed the subject.

"But, my friend," interjected Adolphe, who, as an employee, of the bank, felt in



Was he not the proprietor of a book-stall?

honor bound to uphold the dignity of his position, "one should have a bank-account."

"And why? To give your president money to spend?" asked Desmoulins sarcastically. "That I will never do," he cried decisively. The rotary motion of his head was resumed, this time with such violence one would have imagined that steam instead of human force impelled it.

It was Adolphe's turn to shrug his

shoulders. "It is for you to decide," he said contemptuously. "But remember, Camile, people who keep their money in old stockings sometimes regret it."

"Never fear," snarled Camile. He glared at Adolphe, for he recognized in the suggestion a veiled allusion to his wife.

Adolphe ran up the broad steps and disappeared in the bank and Camile, still scowling at what he considered undue interference in his affairs, took himself along the Boulevard des Italiens. At the Rue de Richelieu he turned and, following that street, soon came to the Seine and, as a natural consequence, to his place

of business, for Camile had selected as the point from which to make his plunge into the turbulent commercial world a spot on the quiet banks of that noble river.

There Camile stopped. His small body swelled with importance as he gazed at his establishment, for was he not the proprietor of a book-stall? If it were true that for lack of customers it did little business, was he none the less a *marchand des livres*? If the stall consisted simply of a long box placed on top the stone parapet next the river, was it not sufficient? Did it not compare favorably with hundreds of others strung likewise on top of the same wall?

Camile nodded his bald head and smiled to himself as with a huge key he unlocked the padlock, flung open the top, and revealed to the world the precious contents of the box. That this mass of merchandise consisted of an incongruous grouping of torn and dirty volumes of more or less ancient literature mattered not to Camile. That these books had been battered about for years and were in a decided state of second-handedness, did not appear to their owner. To him each volume was a thing of beauty.

With a fond gaze he feasted his eyes upon them, dusted them with his torn handkerchief, arranged them that they might be displayed to better advantage. This done he looked about him for customers. None intruded themselves upon him.

To his head he applied the same handkerchief with which he had dusted his books and rubbed his shining pate, for the day was exceedingly hot. With fierce intensity the sun cast its rays into the street. Two or three boys, oblivious of these eager rays, played in the roadway; a woman or two, going home from market, hunted the shade of the tall buildings opposite; and, from the great bathing establishment across the river joyous shouts smote upon his ear as the bathers plunged into the cool water.

"*Mon Dieu! Il fait chaud!*" grumbled Camile to the bookseller whose stall was next his.

It was undeniably hot, the man ad-

mitted, and as evidence of his assertion fanned himself with his hat.

Camile moved into the shade of the tall chestnut tree that grew near and leaned against his stall.

An idler, who possibly had come to the river for its cool breath, stopped and fingered the already well-thumbed books and in the course of fingering dog-eared them the more.

"Will *monsieur* have a book?" inquired the *marchand des livres* and gave the stranger a complaisant smile.

But the man looked at him with reproachful eyes, as if the exertion of a reply were too great an effort on this hot day and, resting himself against the stall, appeared to forget the existence of the proprietor in his contemplation of the river and the tall Louvre over the way.

"Dog!" muttered Camile and turned his back upon him. "These idiots never read. It is their desire to remain ignorant," and into the welcome shade of the chestnut, hot and disgusted, he again took himself.

Leaning against the parapet with half open eyes Camile watched the small boats speeding up and down the swiftly running current and dreamily listened to the bathers across the stream.

"Fools that they are to spend their money so," growled Camile, and a dark scowl clouded his face. "It costs a *franc* to bathe there, when one can bathe elsewhere for nothing. Do they not care to save? I will never spend my money for such things. Money is too precious. I save that some day I may have sufficient and then—"

The muttered thought pleased him mightily for he rubbed his hands and displayed his teeth, as in the future he saw himself driving through the streets of Paris, spurning those who now patronized him, turning aside with his foot those who now jeered him.

"No, it will not be long," he told himself gleefully. "Already I have almost enough."

In the ecstasy of his enjoyment the crusty old man stealthily reached out his hand and picked up a torn and dilapidated volume. Lovingly he opened it. A light of satisfaction gleamed in his eye.

"It is good to look at; it warms my heart," he croaked, and hugged the book to his bosom. "No banks for me," he growled, as he silently returned the book to its accustomed place. "That Adolphe! He can not have my money with which to gamble, to throw into vaults! One must be very careful with one's money these days."

The idler, still intent upon the walls of the Louvre, coughed, and Camile's soul trembled. Had he seen? With sharp eyes the old man scrutinized him narrowly. Not a muscle moved. Just the slightest tremor of the eye indicated that he was awake. Perhaps it was the fiery sun vividly reflected from the river? Paris might have been thousands of miles away for all this man cared, this strange individual who appeared to see nothing but those cold walls.

Satisfied, Camile mopped his brow and rubbed his shining head, and fell to looking at the river again. The water ran swiftly by, almost free of boats now. A man, evidently lazy like himself, walked along its banks, seeking a shady stop. He nodded to the idler.

Coming across the street, his tall form casting a long shadow in the afternoon-sun, Camile recognized a customer. The newcomer pushed his hat on the back of his head and waved his hand to the bookseller.

"*Bon jour, Monsieur Desmoulins,*" he called in a cheery voice.

"*Bon jour, Monsieur Fenelon,*" grunted Camile.

It was not the old man's custom to greet this man pleasantly. A better bargain might be struck if he maintained his ordinarily harsh manner; amiability might be construed as weakness on his part, for in this instance Camile was the purchaser, Prosper Fenelon the seller, and the bookseller proposed to drive him hard.

Desmoulins detested Fenelon for the latter belonged to the impecunious: he was an artist. And, while Camile told himself that he loved and admired art, he despised artists. They never had money with which to buy books! In his heart Camile envied Fenelon even while he

loathed him. These two analogous feelings churned themselves in Camile's narrow breast and produced hate. The reason is easy to discover. It was not that the emoluments gained by Prosper in his chosen field of endeavor were large or regular, but because Prosper enjoyed life in spite of the diminutive size of his income and of the infrequency of its days of arrival. One thing Camile could never learn was, how to find pleasure out of anything aside from money.

In the ratio that Camile hated him, Fenelon abominated Desmoulins. The man of books was a miser, and if there was anything in the wide world that Prosper found distasteful, it was niggardliness. According to Prosper's creed money was made to be spent, and his most ardent admirer could never have proclaimed him a saving soul. While he abhorred Camile, Prosper was aware he possessed the money for which he found so much use and, because of this, tolerated him.

On occasion when Prosper had failed everywhere in Paris to get the money so necessary for his desires, he had sold to Camile sketches, paintings, various bits of Parisian life on canvas. The price Camile paid was ridiculously low; hardly a pittance, Prosper knew. But what could he do?

"He is a screw," Prosper would say and shrug his shoulders. "But one must have money."

These purchases Camile turned to good account and sold in the art-stores in the Rue Rivoli for thrice the price he paid.

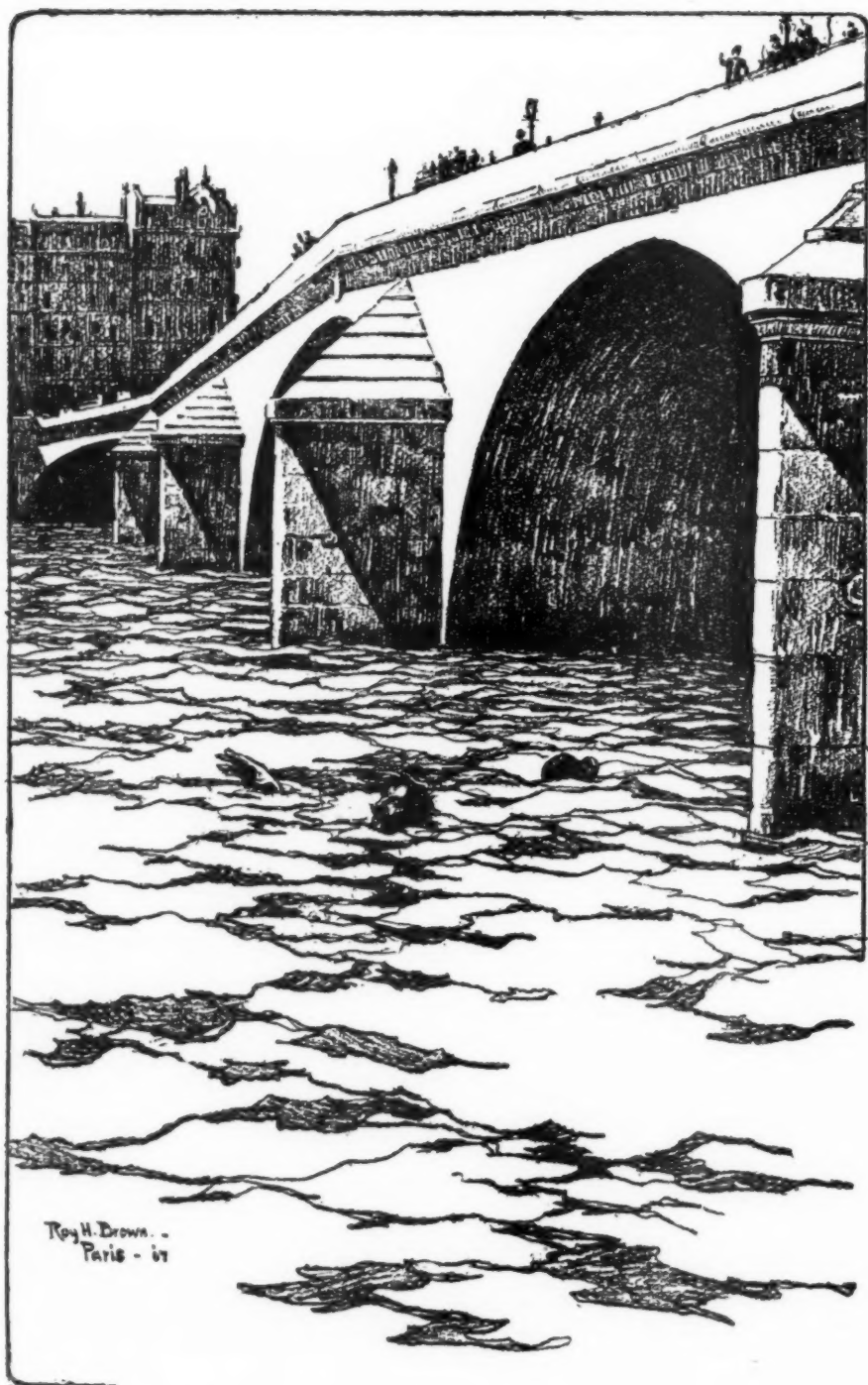
Prosper stopped in front of the stall and listlessly eyed the array of dead and dying literature.

"Can I serve you?" asked Camile, and cast his eye in the direction of the portfolio Prosper carried.

"Perhaps," was the laconic answer of the artist. "I want money."

"I do not sell money. My trade is in books—beautiful books that give you thoughts more valuable than money," and Camile smiled at his wit.

"Books may have their place," said Prosper shortly, waving the attempt at mirth aside, "but one does not eat books. One is not a worm."



A man had fallen from the bridge and the current was carrying him down the stream

Camile started. "At once an insult to my trade. Always the same," he muttered.

"But I haven't any money," he complained. "Business has been very dull."

"It is necessary that I have it," insisted Prosper firmly and laid his portfolio on the stall. "I owe to Madame Capdeville fifty *francs*. Owing Madame Capdeville is one thing; that, I can sometime pay. But the fact that I cannot take Marie to the *fête* to-morrow is another. Poor Marie! She will be in despair! And to think that I—I, Prosper Fenelon, can not redeem my word!" And the suppliant laid his hand on the shoulder of the little man and placed his face close to Camile's that he might see his emotion. Camile looked; Camile nodded; Camile said he understood.

"You comprehend then," smiled Prosper and opened his case. "You then give me the money?"

"As I have said, my friend," returned Camile and he shook his shining head, "I have no money."

Prosper glared at the little bookseller and his tall form towered above him.

"It may be so," he said through his clenched teeth, and the thought of how he had degraded himself in asking for it burned him. "It may be that you have not the money, I can not tell; but if you knew the distress of my circumstances, if you could comprehend how my Marie will grieve, you would raise me the money: this work is worth money. I have promised that she should go to Saint Cloud to-morrow, and this morning that imbecile of a butcher in Rue Bonaparte, who was to give me one hundred *francs* for that beautiful picture I painted of him, has gone from Paris for three days! This very morning, think of it! and here I am and my total wealth is four *francs*! Four *francs*!" and in his palm Prosper displayed four silver pieces.

With wonderful skill Camile controlled his emotion.

"Four *francs*! Eighty *sous*!" almost screamed Prosper and dashed the coins into his pocket. "How far will that go? And Marie counts so much on the day!"

And into the pockets of his corduroy trousers he stuck his hands, stamped his feet on the sidewalk, and, in his anger,

strode up and down in front of the book-stall.

"*Par Dieu!* It may be so," he swore, "what you say about having no money. But it exasperates me, that Madame Capdeville! Without the slightest consideration for my feelings she tells me that I pay to-morrow or move. Move! I will leave her house. I will not live under her roof another night! But Marie, she waits and expects me to take her to Saint Cloud to-morrow! Could anything be worse?"

Camile admitted that it was terrible.

"It is unbelievable," cried Prosper.

"What shall you do?" inquired Camile.

"Do?" repeated Prosper with a vehement gesture. "Do? I have just asked you for the money. Without it what can I do?"

Before Camile could reply there was a tremendous splash in the river. Prosper rushed to the wall to look over and Camile strained his neck to see. A man had fallen from the bridge and the swift current was fast carrying him down the stream. The idler, who had been so engrossed in the walls of the Louvre, mounted on Camile's stall, jumped about on his precious books, and shouted to the man in the river to swim ashore.

Camile, leaning over his stall and endeavoring to extract a book from its accustomed place, was walked upon by this excited stranger, kicked in the ribs by that careless gentleman, and given a black eye by his negligent heels.

"Wow!" yelled Camile, and he clapped his hands over his discolored orb. "You murder me!"

Prosper, who had hurried to the drowning man's assistance, lay down on the bank of the river and held out an encouraging hand to him.

"Take hold of his coat! Grab his coat!" shouted the stranger. "See!" he called, "you nearly have him! Try again!" he yelled as the coat slipped and in his delirium of excitement he jumped about on Camile's bent shoulders.

"Help, help!" shouted the nearly prostrate bookseller. "He murders me! He murders me!" but the crowd, which the

turmoil had drawn to the water's edge, was too intent upon the tragedy being enacted in the river to heed Camile's cries.

Nearly exhausted, the man in the water made a desperate lunge for Prosper's extended hand, grabbed it, almost pulled the artist into the stream, swung around in the current against the stones, slipped, grabbed hold of Prosper again, and was almost gone. But Prosper held him firmly.

There was a shout of approval from the crowd and all hurried to Prosper's aid. Some *gendarmes* appeared with grappling-hooks and a stretcher. They managed to pull the man out of the water and then carried him to the street.

In the meantime the stranger, having forced the battered bookseller to move, seized the book Camile had sought so desperately to secure, jumped to the street, and disappeared in the crowd.

"I am robbed and murdered! Robbed and murdered!" yelled Camile standing there in the flesh, gesticulating wildly, his eyes rolling, the blood trickling down his forehead. "Oh, *Mon Dieu! Mon Dieu!* He has robbed me! Robbed me!"

At the shouts the half-drowned man opened his eyes and just the faintest of smiles played about his lips.

"He will live," said the police and ran to Camile, who, raving about in front of his stall, like one distraught, called upon the police to witness how he had been killed, how he had been cheated out of his hard-earned savings.

The police, as French police do, lost their heads, and like parrots imitated the actions of the old man. At length they had all the crowd circling about them.

When they had got into a corner where they could not move, Camile took breath. Chattering and trembling he related the events. He dwelt upon the fact that the man had struck him unmercifully, had trod upon his unoffending head, had broken his ribs, and stolen his book—*La Vie Bohême*—the book in which he kept all his money, every *sou* he owned! "Ten thousand *francs!* Ten thousand! Oh, *mon Dieu!* Oh, *mon Dieu!*"

Into every corner the police searched, into every café they looked, all through the quarter.

Camile Desmoulins' ten thousand *francs* was gone.

"Ten thousand *francs* is a lot of money," said Auguste Andrée, the butcher, looking at the trembling remnant of humanity who had lost it. "I wish I had it."

"And I," echoed Honore Becquerel, the cobbler. There was none in that crowd who had a sympathetic word for the sufferer.

The drowning man had been revived with some stimulants with such good effect that he proclaimed himself well enough to walk.

Before he left, however, he gave Prosper his hand. "Your name, please?" he asked.

Prosper told him.

"Address?"

"*Boulevard Mont Parnasse, cinquième étage, numéro 44.*"

"You have been brave and have rendered me a service," he said. "I shall not forget it. I shall reward it."

Prosper smiled. "It would better be quickly," he laughed, "for if I do not pay my rent to-morrow I must move; and worse than that, I cannot take Marie to the *fête.*"

The man laughed. Prosper was so ingenuous.

"It will be quickly and Marie shall go to the *fête,*" he said and was gone.

With a light heart Prosper climbed up the long dark stairs of Madame Capdeville's house. After all, they were to go, and Marie would be so happy.

He threw open the door on the fifth floor and shouted the news.

Instantly Marie flew into his arms.

"But you are wet. Your coat is soaking. What has happened?"

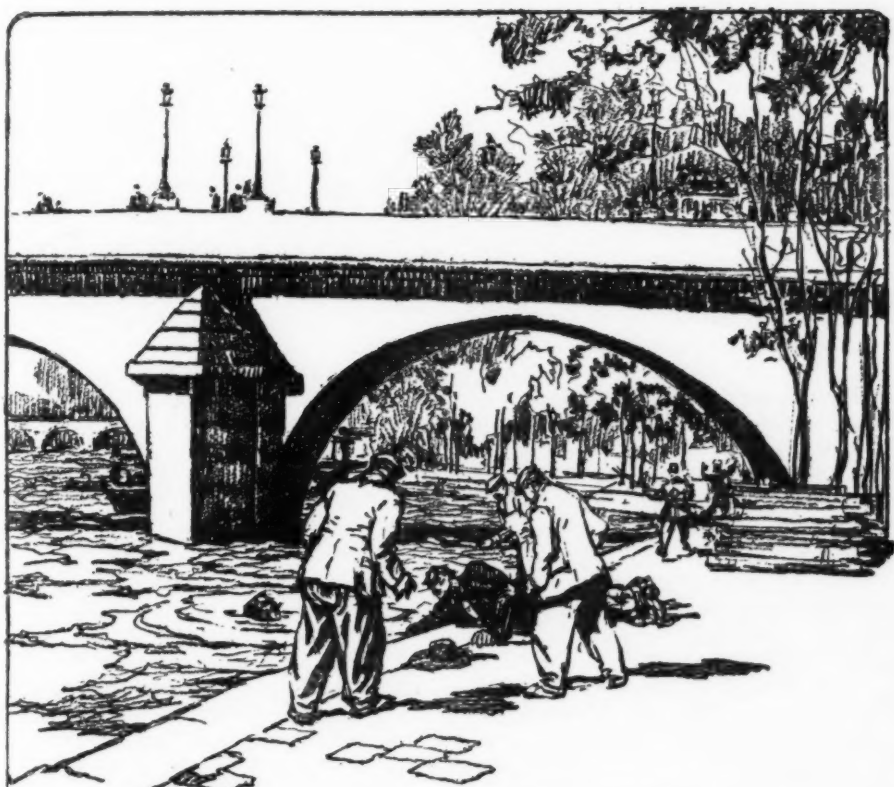
Minutely Prosper related the details.

"My brave Prosper," murmured Marie, and put her head on his shoulder.

"You are ever the same good, strong Prosper. And why would not Camile give you the money?"

"Because he is a miser, but he has none to give now. He has been robbed of every *sou.*"

"He has robbed you enough—and yet I feel sorry for him," she said thought-



The man made a lunge for Prosper's hand

fully. "He is old and not strong like you. He can not make money like you."

"But he knows how to save it," suggested Prosper.

"But it does him no good, if he is robbed," commented kind-hearted Marie with a sigh. "We shall remember him; we shall get him something out of your reward. Shall we not, *mon cher*?"

Good-natured Prosper patted Marie on the cheek and promised it should be as she wished; and Marie smiled her pleasure and gave him a kiss for his words.

A loud knock at the door caused Marie

to fly about the room to put it in condition for the expected visitor and to Prosper's "*Entrée!*" his friend from the river presented himself.

With easy grace he greeted Prosper, and the twinkle in his eye indicated that he recognized Marie even before Prosper introduced her.

The rescued man wore the same suit of clothes in which he had taken his involuntary bath in the river. They had been dried and pulled into a semblance of their original shape, but still showed marks of water. They were English made, one could tell at a glance, but the wearer appeared to be French and spoke with a native accent.

"Monsieur Fenelon," he said with a bright smile, the merry twinkle still playing about his eyes, "you have rendered me a remarkable service to-day—more of

a service than you imagine, and I appreciate it."

"My Prosper is always brave," murmured Marie and placed her little hand in his strong fist. "He would never see a man drown. He would risk his life to save him. Wouldn't you, dear?" and her bright eyes, full of confidence, looked with pride into her sweetheart's face.

The artist nodded to the woman at his side and squeezed her hand.

"He has proved it to-day," said the man, still smiling. "And as his reward I wish you to accept this," and he dropped into Marie's hand something that glistened.

Marie knew by the glint that it was gold, and opening her palm saw lying there ten *louis d'or*. Her eyes sparkled. Even her vivacious tongue was silenced with surprise. Ten *louis*! Two hundred *francs*! Had any one dreamed of such generosity!

With an impulsive gesture she threw her arms about Prosper's neck and kissed him. She grabbed him about the waist and danced through the room for joy.

Seizing the generous one by both hands, Prosper gave them a hearty pressure and the three whirled about the room in a circle.

They insisted that he remain to dinner, that he be their guest on the morrow—the morrow he had made possible! Marie put her hands on his shoulders and looked him full in the eyes, and her gaze thanked him better than any words she could utter. He understood and smiled, and in that smile there was a touch of sadness; but it did not linger long for he laughed heartily and said he had done only what was fair.

"Did he not save my life?" he asked, but still that merry twinkle played about his eyes. "What are two hundred *francs* compared to a human life? Now I must go; it is impossible that I should accept."

"Go!" cried Marie and her grateful soul rebelled at such a thought. "But you may not go, *monsieur*! You must remain and have dinner with us. Nothing is so important as dinner," and Marie smiled.

That smile made him waver. For a moment he hesitated.

"Run, Prosper, run and get the things,"

cried she. "We shall have such a dinner!"

"But it is not possible," persisted the man, and disengaged himself from Marie's grasp. "It is truly impossible," he called and was gone.

They could hear him running down the long stair.

"He might have stayed," protested Marie, looking over the banister at his retreating figure.

"Nevertheless, we shall make out a dinner," replied Prosper, eyeing the gold pieces.

After they had finished their meal Marie bought some fruit and cakes and wine and a great bunch of flowers, and with Prosper carried them to Camile.

The unfortunate bookseller, his head all bandaged, sat up in his bed and related to Marie the story of his loss, and in a loud voice told her how he had literally been walked upon, and, to bear out his word, displayed his bruises.

"Oh, *mon Dieu*! *Mon Dieu*! All I have is lost," he wailed. "Every *sou*! Ten thousand *francs*!"

Marie whispered to Prosper that they might spare some of theirs. Poor Camile was so hard hit! And out of their store they gave Camile one-half.

When he saw the gold the bookseller grabbed it and hugged it to his bosom and clinked it at his ear.

They left him, and as they went out of the house in their own ears echoed his wails for the lost fortune.

"Poor old man! It is hard for him," said soft-hearted Marie. "He is ruined and at his age!"

The thought came to Prosper how he had refused him and abused him and the recollection kept him from being utterly miserable.

Early the next morning they set out—Prosper and Marie—and hurried to the river and packed themselves into one of the already well-filled boats that stop for a moment at the Place de la Concorde, and were crowded by the passengers, on whose toes they trampled, and who, in turn, trod on theirs; and were amused by the strangers seeing Paris in ten days, and, after a good deal of pushing and shoving arrived at Saint Cloud.

Even at that early hour the grounds were black with people, the *fête* being at its height with its hundreds of different attractions. There were dancing-pavilions, where one could dance one's self tired; balloons where one could go up into the air, way up above the trees; merry-go-rounds, where one could ride one's self sick.

Marie danced, and rode on the merry-go-rounds, and smiled at the pretty brides in their white dresses and long veils, and laughed at the awkward grooms in their dress-suits, and listened to the funny attempts of the strangers to talk French.

Tired out and hungry Prosper hunted a restaurant he knew, where he sometimes went during prosperous days and selected a table at a corner of the sidewalk, where they would not be crowded and could see everything, and, while the dinner was being prepared, they talked and laughed and sang, as if there never was such a thing as a cloud on their horizon, and as if every day the sun shone, and they had such a dinner!

Prosper made a salad after a recipe known only to himself, and laughingly explained to Marie how it should be mixed.

"You see," he said, "you put in vinegar like a spendthrift, that's the gentleman before you; oil like a bondholder, that's my river friend; salt like a miser, that's Camile; pepper like a cautious banker, that's old man Thiers at Adolphe's bank; for this salad has all the characteristics of men."

When Prosper had finished it, Marie pronounced it better than most men, at which Prosper laughed again, he was so gay and happy! None but the best Bordeaux was good enough for this occasion and Marie sipped it with delight and gave Prosper a toast to the rescued man, which Prosper tossed off in glee.

After that came coffee; then Prosper smoked, and he chose for his cigar one regardless of expense, for had he not money with which to pay, plenty of it? He paid the score with a gold-piece, and told the waiter to keep the change. Was there ever such a dinner!

"Now, for the boat-ride," cried Marie, and into a skiff Prosper then helped her;

and Marie was frightened because the boat rocked, but Prosper held her with his strong arm and seated her in the stern of the craft, himself taking the oars. Then he pulled out into the river and they drifted with the current.

The sun was hanging low in the Western sky and the trees cast a shadow over the water as they slowly floated with the stream, and it was quiet and peaceful and they could not hear the noises from Saint Cloud, but only those of the waves rippling against their boat and the creak of the oars in the locks.

"It is like life," mused Marie, dropping her hand over the side into the cool water. "One drifts on and on, and it is so calm, and quiet and sweet; one never wishes to stop."

"Except when one strikes a snag like Madame Capdeville," said Prosper, teasingly.

"Then it is awful," agreed Marie, a frown puckering her brow. "But I do not wish to talk of her. She would have spoiled our day. I am so glad you paid her and stopped her tongue."

"Well, we won't speak of her; we'll talk of something else," responded Prosper, sorry that he had brought up the subject. Then they chatted of the birds in the trees overhead, of the beauty of the trees themselves, of the quietness of the swift-running river, of art, and when Prosper should be a great artist and would command fame and money and should never want for anything, but a shadow passed over Marie's face.

"No," she said softly to Prosper, and with her delicate hand beckoned him to her. "No, I prefer you as you are, my dear Prosper; not with fame and money: for with it comes a change. We are poor now but happy. Money does not bring happiness."

Prosper left his oars and took a seat in the bottom of the boat at Marie's feet and rested his head upon Marie's knees and together they watched the shadows die away and the lights twinkle out, one by one.

The moon came up and smiled upon them and Marie sang to it and greeted its silver face with their old time favorite: "*Au Claire de la Lune.*"

The next day Prosper received a letter. It was mailed from London and read:

You did more than you thought, Monsieur Fenelon, when you pulled me out of the river. Perhaps you know the name of Gustave Daspit? Perhaps you remember he once swam the English channel? There was no danger of my drowning. I fell off the bridge to give my friend an opportunity to secure Desmoulins' cash. The excitement was as I anticipated and

we have the money, except two hundred francs. I shall never attempt another job like that. The memory of your Marie's eyes must ever forbid.

Prosper gulped, then twisted the note and with it lighted a cigar, for Marie must not know. He felt in his pockets. Ten francs! The rest? Saint Cloud!

"Well, after all, Camile paid," he muttered and gave Marie a kiss.

A Broken Engagement

BY ROBERT G. BELLAH

Author of "Their Wedding-Day" etc.

TO a casual observer, he was walking down the front steps; but he knew he was treading on the clouds. And why shouldn't he tread on the clouds, for hadn't he just been accepted by the girl he loved—the girl who was the most beautiful, the most adorable, most—but why multiply those woefully insufficient adjectives?

He finished descending the cloud-steps, slowly traversed the rest of the cloud-block, and then started to cross the cloud-cobblestones of the next street. Meanwhile, that very elusive organ, his mind, was not with him, but was back in the parlor he had just left.

What marvelous things had happened there! She had accepted him! She was to be his—his!

He tried to recall what transpired after she had said "Yes," but everything was most hazy. He remembered that there was some conversation, but just as distinct was the recollection there were also long periods when conversation languished, and yet neither of them was afflicted with *ennui*.

Then he had started to say good-night. This he said at least forty times, and each one was just as fervent as if he and she were to be separated for years, instead of merely twenty-four hours. Each

good-night seemed to bear a certain similarity to every other good-night. There was a profusion of detail, perhaps, and yet a marked similarity. Finally, when the hour was nearer oatmeal and scrambled eggs than lobster and black coffee, the last farewell was pronounced and illustrated; and they both bent their efforts to opening and closing the front door as tactfully as possible, for some parents will sleep lightly. When the door had given its last agonized squeak, and had been irretrievably closed, he felt he would give a perceptible slice from his soul to have been able to say good-night once more. However, the uninterrupted slumber of parents is a blessing to be desired above rubies, so he turned away at last.

He had got thus far in his reflections, and was about to direct his attention to the solution of the problem of how a whole day may be passed as expeditiously as possible, when down the street came a most uncloudlike phenomenon. Of course he didn't see it. Who sees anything except Her, when he has been engaged only a few hours? The phenomenon possessed a horn—one of the new sort which sounds like lost souls wailing in torment. The horn screamed, the acetylene-eyes glared, and finally the man who

pulls all the levers raised his voice and shouted. All was of no avail. The newly-engaged man proceeded calmly across the street. At that hour of the morning phenomena are not wont to emulate the snail, so of course this one couldn't stop; and very soon the catastrophe occurred. Out of the tumult of his thoughts, out of the chaos of his dreams, burst a shrieking, gleaming monster, and smote him a heavy blow. He felt himself being hurled through space, then came another pounding crash, and the curtain of oblivion fell on the stage of his mind.

Wasn't it queer how his head kept spinning around and around? He knew it used to be impossible to turn it more than one-quarter of the way, but now it described a complete circle a multitudinous number of times. It was very interesting. He would tell some of his doctor-friends about it. Also, he wondered whether, after some time, his head would stop, and go the other way. He rather wished it would. It would be a relief. It would also be a relief to cry, he thought. Anyway, he would try it. Yes, that was better. The tears were very soothing. How odd he had never learned before how very comfortable and soothing it was to cry. He would tell the other men about it. They would be glad to know. Then he wondered whether the centrifugal force of the whirling of his head threw the tears very far away. Perhaps the centripetal force had some influence, too, but his head hereupon ached so violently he decided to stop thinking, and just cry in peace.

By-and-by a question began to spin around with his head. He couldn't seem to get it. He would like to ask himself that question if he could only grab it as it flew past. There! He had it. The captured question was: Where—am—I? That was it. Where was he? Well, he would think it over. Suppose he should open his eyes; it might help matters. Of course, nothing must interfere with his restful crying, but then he would risk it and look about.

By Jove! He must be in Heaven, for he could see nothing but sheets. Sheets, he recollected, were quite the rage in

Heaven. Still, he hoped Heaven wasn't so unsanitary it had to be disinfected with that awful-smelling stuff. He had doubts as to its being Heaven. Perhaps it was—Well, he wouldn't worry, anyway.

Somebody was standing over there. It was a girl and she looked very cool and nice. Maybe she was one of the angels. He couldn't see any wings, but that was a very fetching cap on her head. He didn't know angels wore caps, but then he recalled that all the really authoritative pictures of angels had been painted hundreds of years ago, so perhaps the fashion had changed since, and angels now appeared with caps instead of wings. He voted for caps, at all events. However, he had a lingering feeling that he was still on the earth. Sheets and disinfectants and caps! There was some place they all went together, hand in hand, as it were; but he couldn't think where. Ah, he had it! Hospitals! His head whirled a bit faster in honor of this great discovery; but never mind, he had some point to start from.

To be in a hospital, he must be sick or hurt—

And then it all came back to him with a rush. He had been moving along, and a comet or something had struck him. It must have been a comet, for he had been up in the clouds. Why had he been up in the clouds? Why, of course, she had accepted him! That was it! He was engaged to her! His whole soul was one surging ocean of joy, and once more he adopted the theory that he was in Heaven.

The angel with the cap now began to speak, evidently to a gentleman-angel, for the latter had a deep, decided voice. Perhaps it would be well to listen. The brace of angels was standing near his sheets, and it struck him that they had been talking for several æons, so it would be polite to pay them some attention. The cappy angel was speaking so softly it was difficult to hear her, especially as his ears were flying around at such a rate, but finally three words penetrated his daze:

"Both feet gone!"

The next few were moments of acute agony to him. With the weight of his suf-

fering, his brain seemed to become much clearer, and he thought calmly and almost lucidly. He was a hopeless, broken cripple now. He had been run over and both feet cut off. He didn't mind the actual loss so much, because he could worry along somehow in a wheel-chair; but it was the awful, nameless, horror of the consequences as regarded Her that seemed to strike him down. Of course he couldn't marry her now. A numbing faintness possessed him, and again the pounding and gyrating of his head commenced. He must compose himself, though, and plan what he had best do. He would break the engagement, but she must never know why, for her whole life would be poisoned, if she learned that it was only his awful affliction that had parted them. No, he would do it in such a way as would make her pride come to her relief, and she would feel herself well rid of him. He knew just what he would say, so he guessed he had better write the letter at once. He would commit the suicide of his life's happiness as soon as possible, and get the grisly thing finished.

He moved uneasily, and she of the cap bent over him. Then all his thoughts became a jumble.

"Angel," said he, "I'm going to write a letter."

The angel smiled, and passed a cool hand across his forehead. How clever of her to have caught his forehead as it flew by!

"Are you?" said she. "Oh, I think you had better lie still, and go to sleep."

"No, I won't. It's a very important letter, and it must be written. Please lean over, Miss Angel, I want to ask you a question."

He looked carefully all around, and then whispered:

"Is the postal-service always good in Heaven?"

Again the angel smiled.

"Oh, excellent," answered she, "and all the angels are always willing to write letters for visitors, if the visitors want them to. Shall I?"

That would be all right, he thought. He hardly felt well enough to write it himself, anyway, so he nodded assent.

The angel procured very earthly-looking paper and pens, and sat down beside him. The weight of his affliction decided him to start his crying again, as he could think much better thus; so, with tears comfortably flowing, he composed his speeding brains as best he could.

"Please send it to Miss Dorothy Gordon," directed he, "and say: 'I thought I loved you yesterday'"—Yesterday! Was it yesterday? How long had he been here? Well, he would be on the safe side, and start over again. "No, don't say 'yesterday.' Say 'some time ago, but now I love—I love—well, an angel in Heaven with a cap, so I don't want to marry you. I don't love you at all.'"

His heart died within him, but he struggled hard to force himself to finish the horrible letter.

"Then end it up some way. Say 'Hoping you are well,' or 'With kind regards,' or 'Blame it all,' or—" His suffering was making him peevish. "Any way, end it somehow, and send it, and I wish I'd been killed, and I should think you could stop my head, and—I'm—sleepy—and—"

His talk became incoherent, his eyes closed, and soon he was wafted away to sleep on a peaceful stream of tears, ignoring the fact that he had given the Angel neither address nor signature for the letter.

The sun was shining: he could see the light through his eye-lids. He felt very much better; and his head, which used to be whirling in such an abandoned frenzy, was now merely trotting decorously around. Still, he decided that he had better cry some more. There! Now, he could think clearly. There was some reason why he should be horribly unhappy. He wasn't; but the least he could do would be to find out why he should be downcast, instead of having his heart beat in this riotous way. Oh, to be sure. He had written a letter to Dorothy, his Dorothy—his used-to-be-Dorothy. At the terrible thought that he had lost her irrevocably, his heart somewhat modified its thrilling throbs, and his tears flowed faster, so that finally he found he would have to open his eyes in

order to let the pent-up flood escape. He did so, and when the tears had disappeared, he discovered why he was happy. He was looking into the face of—Dorothy! For a moment he gazed lovingly upward.

"Dorothy?" hazarded he, doubtfully.

"Yes, laddie, dear, it's Dorothy. Oh, laddie! I'm so glad you're awake. I couldn't have waited another instant. I should have had to kiss you or something."

She took his hands in hers, and continued: "I hurried here as soon as I knew. We saw it in the paper this morning, and I thought I never could live to get here. And papers make such awful mistakes, we didn't know how badly you were hurt. And, laddie, precious, I told mother and father all about—about last night, and mother brought me, and she's down-stairs. I just flew up to you. I couldn't wait. Supposing, oh supposing, you had been terribly hurt, or—or—"

The look of fear in her face made his heart beat most violently, but then that organ commenced to go down, down, down. She hadn't heard, she hadn't got his letter, she didn't know. He gathered his courage about him, and began:

"Dorothy, didn't you get my—my letter?"

"Oh, laddie, dear, of course I did! The nurse—she's a dear, isn't she?—said that, when you were delirious or unconscious or some awful thing, you were horribly solemn and dictated a funny little letter; and when I said I was Dorothy Gordon, she gave it to me. Of course, I knew you were all hurt, and didn't mean it, and I thought we'd have a good laugh over it. We will, wont we, laddie?"

He didn't answer, and there was a little frightened note in her voice when she spoke again:

"You didn't mean it, laddie. Tell me you didn't mean it, dear!"

His throat was dry and ached dreadfully, but his resolution was unshaken.

"Dorothy, I meant it. I don't love you!"

There was a dead silence, save for the first little audible catch in her throat:

"Laddie!"

Slowly she unclasped his hands, slowly

ly she rose, and slowly she backed away; but when she reached the foot of the bed, she could go no further, and sank down on the sheets.

Over his face stole a look of radiant, speechless delight. It almost hurt him—this surge and ecstasy of bliss. He turned toward her his joyous countenance, and struggled painfully up in bed.

"Dorothy, my sweetheart, Dorothy!" His voice rang with the love that makes this poor old world habitable. "Dorothy, you sat down on my feet!"

"Oh, laddie, I'm sorry. I—"

"But, Dorothy, you sat down on my feet!"

"Yes, laddie, but I didn't sit down very hard, and—"

"Yes, but Dorothy, you sat down on my feet! Don't you understand—my FEET! I heard the nurse say both feet were gone. Of course, she must have meant somebody else's, but I thought I was a hopeless, footless cripple, so I wrote you that letter, dear, but I do love you—I do, I do! I thought I couldn't marry you, when my feet were gone, and so I—I—Oh, Dorothy, come here!"

His hands were stretched out to her, and with face transformed she came to him, and was folded close in his eager arms.

"Oh, laddie, I thought I should die just now! I am so glad you love me. And, laddie, dear, all that dreadful motor did was to cut your head a little, and you'll be all right in just a day or so."

Over her shoulder he looked happily down to where two little ridges in the bed-coverings told of two attached sets of toes underneath, and blissfully he wiggled the useful members.

"Oh, just look what the doctors have done!" exclaimed Dorothy. "They have gone and cut off that lovely lock of your hair that always stood up so straight! Do you know, I think I loved it before I loved you. It seemed so like you—so sturdy and boyish and adorable. You will grow another, wont you?"

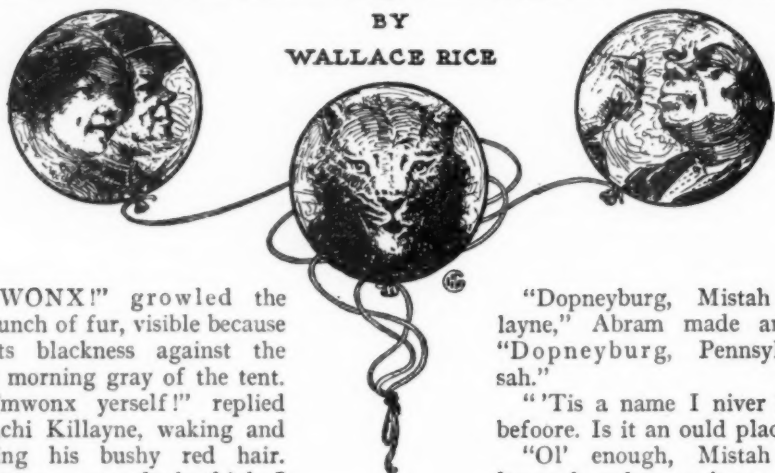
He gave her a ecstatic hug.

"Headsfull!" said he.

Then he clasped her closer still, and for some reason, quite placidly and happily, he wept, and wept, and *wept*.

The Involuntary Father-in-Law

BY
WALLACE RICE



FMWONX!" growled the bunch of fur, visible because of its blackness against the early morning gray of the tent.

"Fmwonx yerself!" replied Malachi Killayne, waking and rubbing his bushy red hair. "Sure now, you don't think I like it anny better than you do."

The light grew until even the darkest corner of the cage in front of which Malachi was lying was illuminated. He arose, stretched himself, and gathered up the blankets, rubber and woolen, in which he had been sleeping. The big-headed jaguar, black as night except for the curious glints in its coat, to show where the rosettes of the normally colored animals are, put forward its great paws, every claw protruding in a cruel curve, hollowed its back, reared its flanks, and yawned and stretched in sympathy.

"Fmwonx!" it observed, querulously, with a rising inflection.

"Sure 'tis consate in ye to be always sp'akin' yer own name like that," said Malachi. "Why can't ye say 'Katie,' as I tould ye?" He rolled up his blankets, pushed them into the box under the seat of the wagon-cage, and went off to see about breakfast for himself and his charge.

Just a little outside of the small tent he came upon Abram, his one assistant and employee, chosen, perhaps, because his color matched that of Fmwonx so perfectly.

"A fine marnin'," said Malachi. "Where is it we ar-re?"

"Dopneyburg, Mistah Killayne," Abram made answer. "Dopneyburg, Pennsylvani', sah."

"'Tis a name I niver heard befoore. Is it an ould place?"

"Ol' enough, Mistah Killayne, but de name's noo. Dey useta call it 'Doranville.'"

"Mother o' mercy, you don't tell me! Well, well, well! 'Tis the fir-st time I was iver where I wanted to be without goin' there—barrin the time I was bor-rrn. Come on now and git Fmwonx's bri'kfast. It's goin' to look about the town I am."

Seeing the beast growling cheerfully over its meat—an unusual allowance being awarded it because of the exhibition to be given through the day, Malachi left Abram in charge, had his own meal under the big commissary-tent with the rest, and wandered idly through the gathering crowd of small boys and their elders, come from town and countryside to see the Mastodonic Agglomeration of Megatherian Marvels, the Only Mammoth Aggregation of Modern Miracles now showing under one tent and with a single ring. The stress laid on the fact that thereby neither Marvel nor Miracle could escape the delighted attention of its audiences, showed at least the ability to coin a necessity into a virtue. In any event, it was a circus.

Malachi knew where he was, perfectly, on that bright Spring morning, though it was now two years since he had left Dopneyburg, *née* Doranville, so precipitately, and gone forth to seek a desultory

fortune far from the side of Katie Doherty. His wanderings brought him early into the care of "The Only Black Jaguar in Captivity," a statement more nearly true than most of those made by Alexander McMurray, proprietor and manager of the Mastodonic Amalgamation. The turbulent beast had been as tractable under his hands as self-respecting jaguars ever permit themselves to be; and he was making a good living as custodian of the animal that was really the chief attraction of the show, so rare was it in form and coloring.

It did not start as if it was to be Malachi's day, that day, as it opened upon him when he came upon McMurray on his unthinking way to the town.

"Where you goin' now, you red-headed mick?" demanded the boss.

"Goin' to the postoffice, y'r anner," said Killayne, surprised through habit into a wholly needless falsehood.

"Hasn't that letter come yet?"

"What letter, sorr?"

"Confound your whiskers! 'What letter?' says he! Why the letter from your girl, you crested cockatoo."

"She—she lives here, sorr," admitted Malachi feebly.

"Uh-huh, so that's why you're neglectin' your wild animal, is it? He's been lookin' like an alley-cat for two-three weeks now. What's the matter with him?"

"It's the Spring, sorr, an' I'm thinkin' he's in love."

"Well, there's somethin' in that. But two of you are too many in one tent, even if you are in love with each other. Do somethin' to him. Make him look as if he belonged to a first-class show, anyway."

"He do that, sorr. Sure, I'm doin' me best for him. But he c'u'dn't look annything but first-class—not in this show, sorr."

McMurray smiled at the blarney, but the combination of that and his own wit pleased him nevertheless. He liked the quiet little red-headed, red-whiskered man—liked him better, perhaps, than any of his fellows in the circus.

There is romance enough in the occupation—especially when viewed from

without—but there is no sympathy for a moon-struck lover, such as Killayne had been adjudged to be from the first. His perpetual habit of writing letters, his everlasting hanging around postoffices at every town he reached, his manifest air of expectancy when he went forth, and his dejection and silence on his return—these made no appeal to the hard-working, hard-headed, and hard-handed sons of Belial who were thrown in with him—at meal time, if not through the day.

Worst of all his disadvantages was the manifest fact that he was saving his money. Not for Malachi Killayne were the wild nights among the hands when work was done—money merely something to spend—an evil taste in the mouth and a sorrow in the head on the morrow the sole results of the expenditure. That it was being saved for a girl made it appear almost pusillanimous—though no one had ever decided to tell him as much. There had been one or two disturbances with the hoodlums of the towns they were passing through on tour, where Malachi, a tent-stake in hand, had proved himself peer with any of the paladins of traditional Donnybrook. A red-headed man, however small, however silent, however penurious, who can yell "Hey, Rube!" and mow down a stalwart countryman with every shout, secures immunity from persecution, if not respect. The circus-men would have tackled Fmwonx himself almost as readily.

Malachi went about his business with a perplexed air. He returned to his tent, secured a bucket of water, threw it by dipperfuls on the jaguar, and reasoned with him when his resentment grew manifest.

"Sure, if ye wont keep y'rself clane, some wan has to clane ye," he said encouragingly, as the brute's roars swelled out the canvas around about. "I'll be sindin' Abram in to ye with soap an' a scrub brush nixt."

The terrified darcy disappeared at the word, and Malachi sat down on the bucket to see if Fmwonx had been stimulated into making a proper toilet. He lost himself in thought while waiting, and his thoughts were perturbed. Here he was in Dopeyburg, within hail of

Katie Doherty at last, and he was not sure, upon reflection, that he was glad of it, long as he had looked forward to it. She had never answered one of his patiently written, daily letters, in all these weary months—and how weary her silence had made them! He thought, with a generous sigh, that perhaps it was as hard for her to write as it was for him; though, in reality, his letters were brief in extent, however long in composition, and invariably ran to this end:

DEAR KATY:

i rote you yessterday to say that your father run me out of town. He tried to swipe me but i doged & he tried to kick me but i jumpt i now take my pen in hand to tell you that your father run me out of town he sayd he wood sent you to a convent if i seen you agin so i did not see you agin. Dear Katy i love you to much please rite and say you love me to much.

yours truly

MALACHI KILLAYNE.

And there always followed the final concession to hopefulness, the address of the Mastodonic Amalgamation's next place of exhibit—and all to no result.

If the old-acting young man had ever heard the song, he would have been singing,

"If she be not fair to me,
What care I how fair she be?"

when he lifted his head from his hard hands and saw Fmwonx, sufficiently dry not to be distasteful to himself, busy with his long deferred cleansing. Abram, too, was satisfactorily back in place, apparently satisfied, temporarily, that he was not to be fed to the "wil' beasses." With a word to him, urging a close watch of the jaguar and the throwing of more water if he grew discouraged in well-doing, Malachi went out. He could have it out with Katy anyway—which was no slight consolation. After months of silence, surely a ruction was better than nothing at all, on the principle that even a poor doughnut has more savor than the hole in it. And if he met the ould man! There were private opinions to be publicly expressed regarding his conduct, opinions formulated at length through long, wakeful hours, in burning words that should wipe out at least a part of

the ignominious retreat at the conclusion of their last interview.

When Katie Doherty came down to get breakfast for her widowed father that morning, it was with the full assurance that something was going to happen. Three times during the night she had had the sensation of some one's holding her hand and squeezing it so tenderly that it awakened her. Who could it be but Malachi? Yet no least word of him had come to her ears since their hasty good-night months before, except the formless, unverifiable rumor that he had been seen with a circus—and Katie, like nearly everybody else in Dopenyburg, knew that a circus was coming, that it had come late the night before, and was even now in town.

Katie's life, never a cheerful one, had been more than ordinarily cheerless since Malachi's unannounced and unaccounted for departure. His unwitnessed conference with her father had not been referred to by that sullen and taciturn worthy, grown more sullen and taciturn as the months slipped by, and none of the comparatively few young men in town showed his daughter, the living image of her beautiful, brown-eyed mother, anything more than formal politeness. He did not know, in his turn, that Malachi's going, hurried though it was, had yet delayed itself long enough to permit him to convey to every eligible suitor in the neighborhood both a promise and a threat—a promise to cut his heart out if he so much as looked cross-eyed at Katie, and a threat to eat it after the operation. Malachi had an air with him that night that carried conviction. Wherefore, it began to look to Dominick Doherty as if he might have to submit to the disgrace of having an unmarried daughter on his hands.

The man had been a changed being since his greatly beloved wife's death, years before. He had been a rollicking blade with the best of them in the County Kerry, but he had grown hard and sour with lapsing time. A windfall of money, the result of a single speculation in oil long before, persuaded him to give up his trade of harness-making and take

to money-lending—a heartless occupation as he conducted it. His old shop was rented, his comfortable little house built on a side street, and a desk in the front of his former work-and sales-room now sufficed for his financial transactions, where he ground the faces of the poor for miles around. But there was not business enough to keep him well employed, and time hung heavily on him. His fellow-townsmen hated and feared him, as he knew, and he returned it by despising them for a parcel of fools who could not keep out of his clutches. This morning, as he came down to his frugal breakfast, morose in face and manner, he was destined to a surprise.

"Where's Malachi Killayne, father?" asked Katie, after her morning salutation had been grudgingly acknowledged.

"In hill, I hope," was the discouraging answer.

It was the first time the name had ever been mentioned between them; but Katie had waited too long to be silenced immediately.

"I've niver had so much as the ghost of a letter from him," she observed.

"No more will ye," said Doherty, surprised into the remark.

"An' why not, I'm wantin' to know. Sure I aint too good to be written to."

"Ye'll niver have a letter from that little rid-headed, rid-eyed, rid-mouthed, rid-whiskered—"

"Sure, it aint his compliction that's botherin' me," interrupted the girl.

"An' he aint botherin' ye, is he?" growled Doherty.

"I wish he was," said Katie, as she disappeared into the kitchen and closed the door against the storm.

Her father waited for her return, talking volubly at her the while. His vocabulary exhausted for the moment, he went to seek her, and found she had dressed and left the house. He gave further vent to his feelings, and sat down to rest until he could tell her what he thought of her last remark. She would be back soon; there was no other place for her to go—the presence of the circus in town had momentarily escaped him.

Dopneyburg is a town of a single street, in which stand all of the more or less public buildings and many of the residences. The rest of these latter lie along two or three tributary lanes, cut at right angles to Franklin street. At the



second of these intersections Malachi halted, and cast a questioning eye under the spreading boughs of its trees.

"Katie, by all that's howly!" he exclaimed, as the sight of the buxom, hearty, high-colored lass drove all thought of the proposed quarrel from his mind.

He stood there expectant, perplexedly pulling at his sandy beard and wishing he had given as much attention to his morning toilet as he had to Fmwonx's, but reflecting with a sigh of satisfaction that his blue uniform must have its usual mollifying effect upon womankind. As Katie neared him he caught her eye, saw her start and blush, put out both his arms in invitation, lowered them at her haughty stare, extended his right hand, dropped that in turn, and stood with his cap in hand.

"How are ye?" she said casually.

A moment before she would have given the world for a glimpse of him.

"Oh, I'm well, praise God!" he responded. "How's y'rself?" Her unexpected treatment of him brought back his earlier determination, and he demanded, "Why didn't ye answer me letters?"

"What letters?" she inquired coldly.

"Why, those I wrote ye, o' coorse," scratching his head for a thought.

"Did ye write anny?"

"Did I—" the thought nearly choked him. "Sure, I've written ye ivery day since the ould man run me out. I had to; I didn' bid ye good-by."

"Sorra a letter have I iver had," said she, suspicion still in her manner. "Ar-re ye sure ye wrote?"

"Am I—well, it aint the thing I'd be after forgettin'." A thought came to his relief at last. "Supposin' we go down to the postoffice an' see about it."

The two attracted the curious gaze of those who knew them, and the strangers in town stared at the young man's uniform. They would have been made the center of a gaping crowd if the circus had not flown its banners as a magnet of superior power just at the head of the street. They fell in with the crowd, and entered the apothecary-shop where the mail was distributed, finding the chemist-postmaster quite alone, and entirely will-

ing to talk through an entire morning in his unaccustomed loneliness.

"Good-morning to you both," he said, somewhat eagerly, pushing back his spectacles. "Why, it's Malachi Killayne!"

"It is that," said the young man, glad to find a welcome at last.

"My, but you're looking spruce in them clothes!" old McEnnis went on.

Malachi smiled and blushed. The uniform had not been getting much previous appreciation.

"I suppose you're not glad to see him, Katie," said the postmaster, jesting in a ponderous and accustomed manner.

"I was niver so glad to see annybody in me life!" exclaimed Miss Doherty, surprised into quick denial.

Malachi was transformed on the instant. He pulled down his jacket, set his cap at a jaunty angle, and was the young man of two years before on the spot.

"Say somethin', ye gawk!" commanded Katie, as the silence grew embarrassing.

"Ar-re they anny letters for Miss Katie Doherty, Mr. McEnnis?" asked Malachi, getting his wits.

"No," said Old McEnnis, "not this week yet."

"Was they wan last week?" inquired Katie, fully interested.

"Of course there was, Katie," said the old man. "I give it to your father for you. Don't you remember?"

"Uh-huh," said Katie, noncommittally. "An' the week before?"

"Yes; every week," nodded McEnnis from behind his counter. "They all say 'Doranville,' but they get here all right."

He glanced at Malachi with a significance that sent a blush to Katie's pretty cheek when he turned it to her.

"Can they do annythin' to people that takes other people's letters?" asked Miss Doherty cautiously.

"Send 'em to jail," said the public functionary, "sometimes to the penitentiary."

"Oh!" exclaimed Katie, satiated with the information; and they went away together.

"Sure, forgive me, Malachi darlin'," the girl pleaded. "It wasn't my fault."

Killayne's face was stern, but he pat-

ted the girl's arm reassuringly. The look of determination in his blue eyes persisted, however, and the reassurance failed of effect.

"Will ye be doin' annything to the ould man?" she inquired timidly.

"I'm goin' to have it out with him."

"He'll not be glad to see ye."

"Oh, he will—whin he finds I'm goin' to save him from the pinitinchary." This last very lightly.

"An' how?"

"Sure, by not sindin' him there, o' coorse."

They walked on in uneasy silence, until the Doherty cottage, its front almost covered by great trees, came to view.

"He'll not be glad to see ye at all," said Katie, pleadingly.

"He will, whin he finds I'm savin' him from trouble," replied Killayne confidently.

Miss Doherty's doubt was resolved into certainty almost immediately. Old Dominick, quite as if he had been watching, met them at the front door.

"Ye imp o' Satan!" was his greeting to Malachi as he stood there threatening, quite as big as three of the little man in uniform.

"I've come to ask ye fer yer blessin'," observed Malachi.

It was not at all what he had intended to observe.

An eruption of incandescent speech, lasting a minute, proved that he wasn't to get what he asked—quite the contrary.

"Shame on ye for usin' such language befoore a young gir-rl!" was Killayne's only reply.

"How else can I say what I think o' ye?" and the volcano burst out afresh, the flow somewhat lacking in lava, but filled with steam and hot cinders.

"Aren't ye ashamed o' yersilf, a big, ould man like you," said Malachi, making ready to put coals of fire on Doherty's head, "an' me a-savin' ye from the pinitinchary?"

"What's that!" roared Dominick.

"Here ye've been pinchin' all o' me letters to Katie, and robbin' the United States mail, an' it's me can put ye in jail the night."

"Letters, is it, ye blackgua-ard!" shouted Doherty. "Wait a minute!"

The little man staggered back as the bundle of intercepted correspondence struck him squarely in the head. The band that held them gave with the impact, and the letters scattered themselves over the porch.

"Pick 'em up!" commanded Doherty.

"Pick 'em up yerself!" answered Killayne scornfully. "D'ye think I'm goin' to make meself accissory to yer crime? Not me. It's jail for you, or yer blessin' on Katie an' me."

"I knew ye for a blackgua-ard," shouted the unshaken father; "an' now I know ye for a low blackmailer. Git out o' here!"

And he moved on the enemy, horse, foot, and heavy dragons.

Malachi had almost too vivid a recollection of his last encounter with the best man in all those parts, and he retreated, his face to the foe.

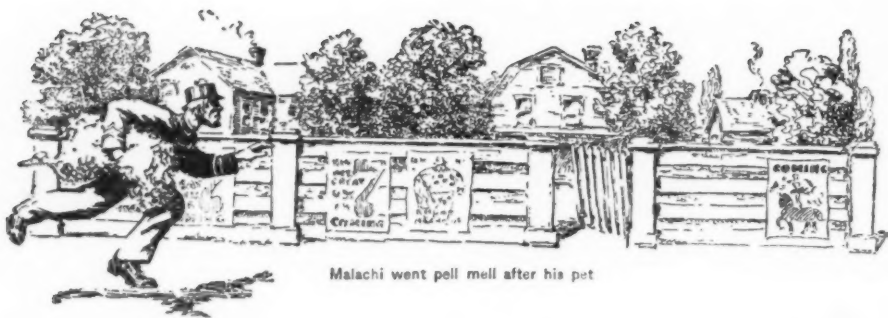
"Well," he remarked, "I've saved ye from the pinitinchary, an' I suppose I'll be havin' to save yer life befoore ye'll trate me dacint. But I'll do it."

He placed the closed gate between himself and Doherty, resting his hands lightly upon it, ready to retreat at the double if necessary.

"Katie," he said, "I've the letters be on the porch till afternoon. Thin I'll be comin' back to have the ould man pick 'em up and hand to ye politely. I've got to go back to Fmwonx now."

He gave an airy toss of his hand as he turned, and Katie blew him a kiss. Doherty ran forward, but Malachi drew off in good order, though under heavy fire. Katie went into the house, her head proudly erect.

Fmwonx, the jaguar, was an animal so rare that he was given a tent to himself, garnished outside with portraits greatly larger than life and much less natural. Letters huge enough to be seen a block announced his ferocity and man-eating habits; during working hours a barker took these for a text to be amplified and embroidered in his nimble mind and so upon his fluent tongue. It was the duty of Malachi Killayne to remain



Malachi went pell mell after his pet

within, at the side of Fmwonx's cage, and point out that animal's wonderful points, whenever his voice could make itself heard above the roars of the really savage beast. These howlings, sifting through the canvas to the multitude without, kept the tent well filled at all times; they left no doubt at all of the jaguar's lack of fondness for humanity, except as an article of diet, in the minds of all who saw him, save Malachi alone. That good soul, who had never been afraid of anything, however, common-sense taught him the respect due Dominick Doherty's heavy fist and foot, had not thought to fear the snarling black brute, the one fact that seemed to give him power over it.

When Malachi returned to his place of business, it was time to begin the reaping of the golden harvest. Young as the day was, and remote the grand triumphal procession of the Court of the Cloth of Gold in the big tent, the crowd was there. He searched out the barker, wound him up for the day, and set him in front. Abram was extricated from a game of solitaire-craps behind the cage, ordered to water Fmwonx, and the roars of the beast and the lecture of the man began with the arrival of the first-fruits of Dopneyburg. The growls and screeches were even better than usual, from a commercial point of view; business promised to be brisk.

Malachi lectured gayly whenever he could be heard, his lips moving silently the rest of the time. He had an interest in the receipts at his own tent, gladly given by Fmwonx's owners to retain in their employment the only man who had

ever been able to handle the South American tiger successfully. From time to time he smiled as he thought of Katie, rather wondering just how he was going to redeem his half-promise to save old man Doherty's life; but luck was with him and he did not intend to spoil it by being skeptical. Something was bound to happen.

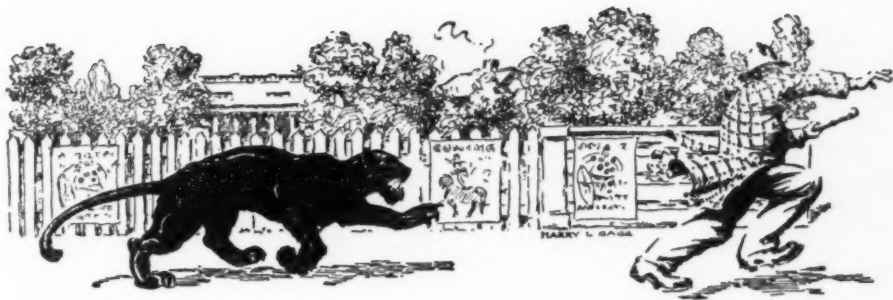
It did, though it was not at all what he or anybody else was looking forward to. Abram, his meager mind upon the chances of the dice rather than on the matter in hand, contrived to joggle loose the heavy bar that secured the gate of the cage behind. Fmwonx was too busily engaged for the first half hour in informing his visitors what he thought of them to notice the slightly gaping door. Yelling and spitting wearied him after a time, and he decided upon a stroll about his small domain to put himself in condition for another period of vocal practice. His eye fell upon the unusual crack.

Screams from those in front gave Malachi his first warning.

"He's getting out!" yelled a countryman.

"He's loose! The tiger's loose!" shouted his neighbor.

Before Malachi could get to the other side of the cage a muffled but heavy thud told him that Fmwonx was out and presumably ready for mischief. He saw the colored man's foot drawn hastily outside of the tent as he rounded the forward wheel, a blow from the jaguar's armed paw ripped the canvas apart an instant later, and Malachi ran through the gap. He saw Fmwonx making toward town, and caught a glimpse of a black streak



He ran with a vision of a cavernous mouth at his boots

flying south, its wool unkinking as it streamed away. This latter he judged to be Abram. Those parts never saw him again.

The crowd in the jaguar's tent pushed out, rushed out, fell out, screaming at the top of its collective lungs:

"The tiger's loose! The tiger's loose!"

Such a contingency had not been looked forward to, but the ready resource of the circus-men showed itself immediately. The people on the grounds were hustled into the big tent, and the employees of the show stationed themselves about it, armed with what had come handy to guard the people, the horses, and the animals in the menagerie from Fmwonx's possible onslaught. Malachi, who had grabbed the long net kept in readiness from the wagon seat as he passed, went pell-mell after his pet, now heading for Franklin street—not very rapidly, because captivity had stiffened limbs never remarkably agile on level ground, but still fast enough to demand speed from his pursuer if he was to be caught this side of the mountains.

Dominick Doherty had followed Katie into the house and up the stairs to her room in front, beside his own. He turned the handle of the door, stepping forward as he did so in anticipation of its opening. It was locked; and he ran his shoulder into the wood and scraped off the paint with an ungraceful foot in consequence. It did not soothe a temper already fully ruffled, and he found himself alternating between threats to break the

door down if it wasn't opened straight away, and horrid predictions about Malachi's future. Stopping for breath, Dominick heard his daughter sobbing within, and the familiar memory of the wife of his youth came into his mind and set him to preparing articles of capitulation forthwith.

"What is it ye'll be havin' me doin', Katie darlint?" he inquired softly through the door.

"Go down and pick up them letters," came brokenly as a response.

With a gasp of surprise and chagrin Dominick betook himself to the sitting-room below, his lips parching in a fever of rage against Malachi Killayne, destroyer of his domestic peace. He threw himself into the most uncomfortable chair, his head between his hands, thinking up primeval forms of torture for the little red-headed circus-man. When the world began to go crimson before him he suddenly realized that this was doing him no possible good and Malachi no palpable harm. Translating his rage into conduct, immediate action in the nature of a punitive expedition suggested itself. He took up his blackthorn stick and started for the circus, prepared, if necessary, to clean out the show and all the appurtenances thereto.

It was a fine figure of a man that went down the street, a giant, still in the prime of life, and every fiber instinct with energy. Walking very erect, tensing his muscles as he went and easing his mind by swinging the stick in vicious circles, Dominick became conscious of

something out of the ordinary as his foot struck the walk in front of his house. Cries and screams, alarms and shoutings came down to him from Franklin street. Dimly connecting them in his perturbed mind with the promised circus-parade, he determined on the instant to chastise the offending Malachi in the presence of the assembled multitude. The thought brought a glow to his cheek, a spring to his stride, and power to the mighty arm that held the trusty blackthorn.

At the corner of Franklin street the big man stopped, amazed to find the thoroughfare absolutely deserted. Not even a dog roved in sight. Looking toward the circus-grounds at his right, no great distance away, he saw that these, too, were devoid of the usual crowd. Bringing his eyes down into the immediate foreground, he let out a howl of dismay. Coming toward him at an ungraceful canter, its back humping awkwardly, and its hind legs maintaining a gait wholly at odds with that of its fore limbs, was a black and monstrous form, its head as big as a barrel, with fangs that seemed inches long and as pointed as a pitchfork. It was the emperor of all the witches' cats he had ever seen or dreamed of.

Dominick did not stop to see the little red-headed man running along behind.

"The divvle an' all his angels!" he howled, and turned in his steps to reach his home. A screech as of one in mortal agony came from behind him as he whirled about, the view-halloo of the wild beast scenting its prey, and he ran with a vision of a cavernous, slaving mouth snapping at his boots. The best heavyweight in all that region became a sprinter in the twinkling of a frightened eye, and with quivering lip and leaping feet he sought the only shelter he knew against a sudden and hideous fate.

As Dominick reached his own place another screech close behind lifted him over the fence and upon the porch, the letters in controversy flying in the gust of wind he brought with him. He spilled himself into the house, his presence of mind just sufficing to make him slam the door behind him. He lifted himself up the stairs three and four steps at a leap,

plunged into his room beside Katie's, threw himself half through the open window, and began calling at the top of his voice for aid.

"Hilp! hilp! murther! I'll be kilt!" he screamed, calling on a deserted street and a world that seemed empty of everything except a black monster that could eat an elephant. Malachi had not come into view, the ardor of the chase having quickened his truant-charge's padding steps beyond his own best endeavor.

The jaguar was near enough to Doherty to be compelled to rear himself against the door as it slammed. He fmwonx impatiently once or twice, at finding himself baffled of his prey when it was fairly in reach, pricked up his rounded ears in another minute as he heard the agonized voice above, and went down into the yard forthwith to investigate. A tree beside him led, with the help of an overhanging branch and the roof of the porch, to the window where Doherty was hanging out. Possibly, with a memory of Amazonian forests in his quickening brain, Fmwonx gave a leap with unsheathed, sickle-like claws, and was on the trunk and going upward. Dominick saw the action and bent over the sill, paralyzed, fascinated by the steady approach of a sable and ferocious death.

"Hilp," he shouted with redoubled fervor. "Hilp, the divvle himself is after me! He's climbin' the tree to get me! Hilp!"

Malachi arrived at the front gate, net in hand, and breathless.

"Oh Doherty!" he called. "Here, Doherty! O-o-o, you Doherty!" and called again before he could get Dominick's attention unriveted from the black beast on the tree trunk.

The comparatively small size of the tree, the absence of lower branches, and lack of accustomedness made Fmwonx's climbing abnormally and gratefully slow, though none the less sure.

"Save me! Sa-ve me!" Dominick appealed with all the strength left in him to the little masterful figure below as soon as his eyes rested on it.

"Do I get Katie?" inquired her suitor persuasively, catching sight of her

frightened face at the next window and grinning back to her a message of reassurance.

"You do. Sa-ave me!" screamed back Dominick.

"Will ye pick up them letters?" Killayne asked again.

"I will—but not now. Save me!" shouted Doherty in final agony.

Fmwonx's head was level with the roof of the porch.

"Thin shut your mouth, and shut the windy, ye fool!" ordered Malachi.

"There," he added as the window came down with a crash, "I tould ye I'd save yer life," then turned to the serious business in hand.

At a loss, through the sudden withdrawal of his quarry and the closing down of his expected avenue of approach thereto, Fmwonx thudded down to the ground, and turned on his keeper, the desire for prey still strong in him, his tail lashing from side to side, and his huge, fanged mouth open enough to show his growling throat. He crept toward the fence where Killayne was standing, and gathered his paws under him for a mighty leap. At the critical moment, Malachi, who had been gathering the long net into loops, threw it fairly over and beyond the black brute, covering him completely. Those who wish to gain an idea of the result can experiment with any house-cat and a piece of gauze.

Fmwonx tore at the enveloping cords with a sweeping paw, and found it entangled. A clutch with the other increased his perplexities. He snarled at it and found it around his great teeth. Rolling over to bring his hind legs into play entangled those at the same time that it grasped his body on every side. The growling and roaring was tremendous, but the situation was so laughable that, on a wink from Malachi, Katie opened her window and leaned out, almost going into hysterics at the antics of the captured beast.

When Fmwonx was thoroughly confused and occupied with the net, Malachi came into the yard, gathered up the outlying ends of the net and twisted them together, shouldered them, leaving the big cat considerably in the rear, and with

a parting "God bless ye!" to his love, started out of the yard and down the street, Fmwonx dragging, bumping, snarling, and clawing at the net with every step.

"Ah, come on now, ye black divvle," said Malachi affectionately. "Come on p'aceably, an' I'll have ye stand up with me at the weddin' to-morra'." And he laughed aloud at the vision he conjured up of his prospective father-in-law's giving away the bride in such circumstances. "Come on now, an' we'll go back home."

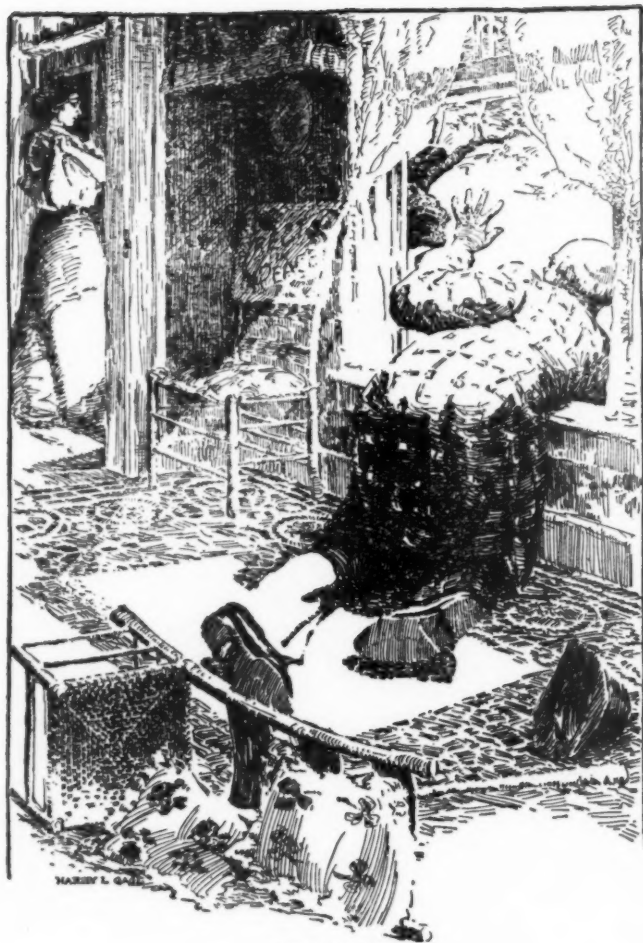
The windows along Franklin street were filled with frightened faces as the curious procession passed, their pallor reddening in wonder as they saw the little man towing along a beast weighing more than himself, the ferocity of which made them shudder anew as his growls and struggles became apparent. McEnnis gained permanent distinction by averring that he distinctly heard the jaguar promise to be good if Malachi would let him out, and that he began to purr like a saw mill when the little man told him he'd let him out as soon as they reached home.

Alexander McMurray himself ran down from the circus-grounds as soon as he caught sight of Killayne and Fmwonx, and lent a ready and accomplished hand in getting the jaguar back into his cage, where a great chunk of meat stood thoughtfully ready in its farthest corner. In a few minutes the net was slashed away, and Fmwonx was feeding with his usual concern for victuals, apparently without memory of his brief and successful intervention in Mr. Killayne's love affairs.

"Thank ye kindly, Mr. McMurray," said Malachi. "An' the bist o' luck to you this day," he added to Fmwonx; "'tis the good turn ye've done me, an' I'll not be forgittin' it."

"Malachi," said the boss, reaching into his pocket, "I judge from your speech that you're thinkin' o' playin' the love-bird act. Will you buy the ladybird some-thin' she wants for me, and tell her we'll be proud to welcome her to our midst in the Mastodon Amalgamation."

And he handed Malachi a roll of green and yellow backs "big enough," the



"Hilp! Hilp!"

recipient said afterward, "to choke Fmwonx to death."

McMurray and Killayne went out the front way and shouted their success to the men still on guard about the big tent. The good news was borne within, and the multitude began to emerge.

Malachi saw the usual meed of recent American heroes hovering on the lips of the grateful women that were coming toward him and, in spite of McMurray's detaining hand, he turned and fled. He dodged the crowd, made a detour to avoid the people in Franklin street, and came to the Doherty cottage from the

other side. Katie and her father were standing on the porch, evidently awaiting his coming. The landscape was devoid of scattered letters, and Dominick was sheepishly holding an untidy bundle which seemed to account for them.

"Here are those—letters," he said with a gasp as Malachi came up the steps. The pause sounded profane.

"Did he pick them up himsilf, Katie darlin'?" Killayne inquired sweetly.

"Sorra a wan else," said Katie grimly. "I watched him."

"Give 'em to y'r da'hter, where they belong," the little man commanded.

It was done; but it would be idle to say that Doherty acted as if he preferred to do it.

"An' I get Katie whin I come to take her to the priest to-morra?" Malachi asked, as he put his arm around the blushing girl's yielding waist. She was proud of him, and she had not feared for him; long before she had judged him a better man than her big father.

"You do," answered the father-in-law-elect.

"Sure," said Malachi Killayne, as he took his blankets from the wagon-seat that night, "sure I've tamed bigger brutes nor iver you were, ye wooly dago."

"Fwmonx," said the jaguar.

"Fmwonx yirsilf," said Malachi. "Will ye niver say 'Katie?'"

The Ringers

BY EDWARD BOLTWOOD

ILLUSTRATED BY FRED WOODS

HERE I sit," retorted Maximilian O'Brien, "and crumple you up with my contempt."

Basking in the sun of a Saturday afternoon, he was sprawled on a box behind the shipping-room of the Nottingham Mills. My offensive proposition was merely that we attend a baseball game between the Nottinghams and the Derbies. The Derbies represented the Derby Mills at the other end of the secluded New Hampshire valley, where public diversion is infrequent, for therein are only the two small factory-villages, four miles apart, with the railroad which binds them to one another and to the outer world.

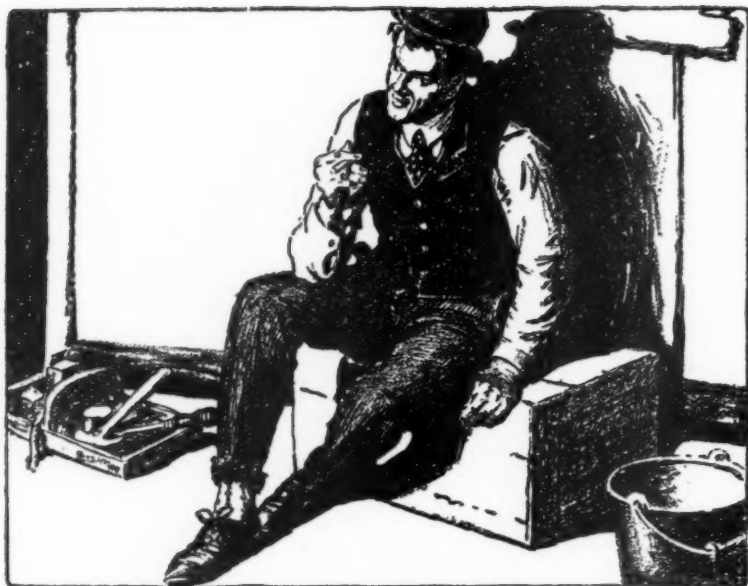
"You ask me," continued Mr. O'Brien severely, "to go to see grown men run ninety feet from base to base to beat the throw of a bally horse-hide ball! Sir, did you ever hear of the Nottingham Belt? That is what I've seen men run for with these eyes—and now you ask me—but no matter.

"The Nottingham Belt? In the days of Columbus or P. T. Barnum, or sometime, an Englishman built these mills and another Englishman built the Derby Mills, and they called them after home, sweet home, feeling that way. The Nottingham Englishman's name was Percy, but he was a real sport. He hadn't hardly

blown his factory-whistle before he put up a prize-belt for a mile run to be pulled off annual, once or twice a year. You couldn't run for the belt without you were a *bony-fid* factory hand, here or up at Derby. Strictly amytoor—that was the English of it. Old Percy and the Derby man used to bet their guineas liberal as tainted money.

"The fever percolated like typhoid from the boss-weavers down to the bobbin-boys. The populace became heated about this belt and acquired the pleasing habit of wagering their footwear, unanimous, on the holding of it. They laid out a cinder track midway between the mills, where those regenerates are tagging each other this afternoon. They don't have the great belt-races any more. The last run chloroformed those contests. But the last one was a good one. Yes.

"Myself and big Dan McClintock boarded at the Widow Murray's, cherishing a regard for chicken-pies and a pretty girl. The pies treated us lovely from the start, but Norah—well, I wake up when called. McClintock was different. The way he began to look at Norah Murray! Pastry wasn't a circumstance. We'd sit on the widow's steps of an evening, while Norah would be playing 'Oh, Promise Me' on the melodeon inside to Nobby Eliot, the bookkeeper.



"Did you ever hear of the Nottingham Belt?"

"'Ask her, son,' I'd say to McClintock. 'She's playing you, same as those organ-stops.'

"'Let be,' he'd whisper, speaking soft for a large man.

"So I knew she had him nailed and stenciled, ready for shipment. I was sorry, this Eliot being a pants-creased dude without any chin worth invoicing. Big Dan was as hard and thick in his biceps as he was in his cerebellum—a solid, straight, fine boy—and he had lost the belt for Nottingham three years on end.

"Understand, only one man could be entered by each mill. How the Derbies chose their man, I don't know. Ours was chose by young Percy, and that meant by Nobby Eliot, because young Percy wore yellow harness on his horses, and thought high of his dude bookkeeper. For three years McClintock had been nominated and had lost to Jerry Huckle, son of the Derby superintendent. Consequently, every Derby swelled his vest like an overweight bale.

"One 'Oh, Promise Me' evening, Eliot came out of the widow's, and bunked in to Dan and myself on the steps.

"'That you, McClintock?' he said.

"'It is,' said Dan.

"'I hear you're training for the belt again,' said Nobby. 'I hear you've been running nights, all winter, in the old weave-shed?'

"Then he snickered and lit a cigaret.

"'If I'm chose to run this year,' said Dan, 'I'll win.'

"'Oh, I guess you're too much of a born loser, McClintock,' chuckles Nobby. He spoke it mean, like that. 'Oh, I guess you're too much of a *born* loser,' he says.

"I put my hand on big Dan's shoulder until Eliot was gone. Dan grunted.

"'They think I'm a loser, him and her,' said he. 'I'll show 'em!'

"You see, he had everything mixed up together in his intellect—the girl, and Nobby, and the Nottingham Belt. Norah had been guying him about the belt, same as everybody else. And he took the guying for gospel, which is unwholesome all around, for the guyers, and the guyee, and the entire congregation.

"A while after, I got word from headquarters to make a job in the shipping-room for a new hand. We didn't need one

there any more than a milliner. Pretty soon he showed up—feller by the name of Spencer—a lean, nifty young tough, full-chested, slim-trunked, not coming down on his heels much of any when he walked.

"'Aha!' I says.

"He couldn't earn enough to buy toothpicks for a unweaned baby, and he didn't seem to give a whoop whether he did or not. The race for the belt was due in a week. I put two and two together, and they made four and some over, so I hiked up to the office, and there was Nobby Eliot.

"'This Spencer,' said I.

"'What about him?' said Nobby.

"'No use to me,' said I.

"'He's from Boston,' said Nobby.

"'I don't care if he's from Bombay,' I says.

"'Mr. Percy, junior, takes a great interest in Spencer,' said Nobby, rubbing his nose with a ruler. 'He's to be kept on. Maybe he'll make good in time.'

"'In about a week,' I said, 'with a pair of spiked shoes?'

"'Eliot slammed the ruler against the desk.

"'You wont blab to anybody, O'Brien,'

he said, 'or you'll be sorry. Take my tip.'

"I was behindhand to supper and sat down in the widow's dining-room, with Norah Murray waiting on me.

"'Has Dan et?' I asked her.

"'Dan's gone home to Jersey to see his folks,' she said. 'He's got a fortnight's leave this evening. Young Mr. Percy gave it to him. Young Mr. Percy told Dan that Mr. Eliot had picked out somebody else to run for the belt next week, so Dan quit work for a fortnight. I don't like quitters, do you?'

"What do you suppose? She sniveled into her apron. Well, I was too hot to bog my brain with a girl. Hot! If I'd had a hospital-thermometer under my tongue that night, it would have busted into a sheet of flame. I don't know why, especially. It was none of my clam-bake.

"Along about nine o'clock I heard voices in the next bedroom. The widow had a new lodger, who was Spencer, and the lodger had a visitor, who was Eliot, and I sat down on the sofa. Nobby gave me a rheumatic-grin.

"'I knew we'd have to let you in on this, O'Brien,' said he.

"'Open the services, then,' said I.

"'Spencer was totally oblivious. He un-



"'I guess you're too much of a born loser,' he says

rolled a bundle he had under his arm, and spread a running-shirt and trunks over the back of a chair to dry.

"This is Snapshot Garrity," says Eliot. 'He can better four and a half for the mile without drawing a card. He can anchor Jerry Huckle, or any other Derby, to the starting-post and leave him there to chew cinders. Are you with us?'

"I never claimed to be hunting a halo, and the Derbies had denuded my pay-envelopes for three bitter years.

"I'm with you," said I, and we shook hands on it.

"Of course, we had to move quiet as three eels. I guaranteed to cover Snapshot Garrity from nosy muck-rakers, and Eliot promised to handle our finances with the apparent innocence of a sugar-trust senator.

"How much cash do you plan to put into this snow-white enterprise?" I said to Nobby, a couple of afternoons before the race.

"He and I and Garrity were roosting on the mill-fence, and Nobby cocked his eye at a new green cottage opposite.

"You can get that for three hundred down, and easy installments," says he. 'I can scrape up a hundred and fifty to bet on Garrity. A win of a hundred and fifty will fix me right.'

"Going to housekeeping?" said I.

"He only whistled that 'Promise Me' tune. I would have succumbed to disgust, but just then the volcano under our get-rich-quickness began to grow peevish. A buggy drove along the road with two

men in it. One of them was Jerry Huckle, from Derby, puffing a cigar. Snapshot Garrity slid off the fence and turned his back to the street.

"Feeling fit to run Saturday, Huckle?" I called.

"Jerry shot off a laugh that would shame a steam-piano.

"Oh, I guess we'll freeze on to the belt, fast enough," said he. 'Get up, pony!'

"Seems funny that he's smoking," Eliot remarks. 'Jerry was always a strict trainer.'

"Say, friends," asks Garrity, kind of weary, 'did you know the other party in that there buggy? That was sure Breeze Bartholomew!'

"I looked at Eliot, and Eliot looked at me, and then the two of us gasped hard and looked at Snapshot.

"Breeze Bartholomew," he says, 'the New England mile-champion. He gave me seventy-five yards at Lynn, and broke the tape before I'd wet my grips.'

"Well, it appeared that Nobby

had an attack of galloping appendicitis.

"The blamed Derby crooks!" he snorted. 'They're going to play a ringer on us! Why, of all the scurrilous frauds!'

"Hold on!" I says. 'People who live in glass-houses can't get gay with mineralogy. This is no time for a lung-storm about crooks, Nobby,' I says. 'Our own doings won't stand any calcium.'

"It's lucky our money isn't up," said Nobby.

"At this, Snapshot Garrity flapped a few signals of hope.



The Ringers



Round they went, see-sawing lap for lap

"'There's money in it yet,' he said. 'Bet on me to lose. I'll lose—I can't help it. Look-a-here!'"

"He showed us a pamphlet—an athletic guide—with a picture of Bartholomew and his record. It was the man in Jerry Huckle's buggy.

"'But we can't bet against Nottingham now without making suspicion,' I said.

"'Maybe we can do it on the Q. T', said Nobby. 'Maybe Pop Hull can steer us.'

"Garrity gave me a bunch of bills to bet the same as ours, and Eliot and I moved on to old Pop Hull's cigar-store next the track. There was our meat, like it was hung on the hooks in a cold-room, waiting for us. He was a cigar-drummer—'Van Slyck,' as Pop introduced him, a cross-eyed gambolier with a flow of language. He was a crank about foot-racing. He wanted to back Nottingham, just on the doctrine of a change of luck, and he had a roll of money the size of a head of lettuce. Eliot breathed hard and accom-

modated the drummer, and I followed suit with Garrity's cash and some of mine. Van Slyck agreed to keep the thing secret and so did Pop Hull, who held stakes.

"'We bet the Nottingham entry will lose,' says Nobby.

"'Correct,' says the drummer. 'I bet the Nottingham entry wont run second. Understand?'"

"Pop understood, and winked at us crafty when we went out. An idea hit me.

"'Anybody can lose for us,' I said to Eliot. 'Why not cut Garrity out altogether? Bartholomew will tell the Derbies about him.'

"'Too late now,' said Nobby. 'Everybody knows he's going to run. Besides, he'll lose artistic, in case of accident. And the Derbies can't give us away without giving themselves away, too. It's a dead-lock.'

"I felt low-down to have the rest of the Nottingham boys drop their money, and I felt lower-down to be helping the

bookkeeper beat out Dan McClintock for pretty Norah Murray. So I promulgated advice to the boys to bet easy, and, as for poor Dan, I had a notion he'd left the village for good, anyway."

O'Brien ceased speaking and looked off across the mill yard toward the tanks where a switch engine was coughing and running back and forth with apparent aimlessness. I did not at once interrupt the momentary dream of the story teller. Perhaps he saw the whole comedy again before his mild eye, just as it was played on that momentous day. But as suddenly as the mood had come upon him, it passed. He shrugged his shoulders.

"Then what?" I urged, gently, fearful he might have lost the thread of his narrative. But he had not—not O'Brien.

"Well, that Saturday afternoon, Snapshot Garrity and Breeze Bartholomew toed the mark. Runners? They weren't runners; they were tragedians. They made Booth and Barrett look like *Flora-dora*. Not a smile between them, not a glance, earnest as wild cats. The crowd lined the quarter-mile track, inside and out. By the gate, a little pale around the gills, was Van Slyck, close to Pop Hull, the ticket-taker.

"Round they went, see-sawing, lap for lap. Oh, it was beautiful! At the three-quarters, Garrity began to make his play, rubbing his side as if he had a stitch. Nobby Eliot started in to whistle 'Oh, Promise Me' with variations.

"They romped into the stretch and ran the prettiest dead-heat you ever saw in your life! Absolutely even.

"The next thing I remember is Nobby and me shaking Pop Hull by his two arms. The crowd was noisy and cavorting, and we couldn't hear his talk at first. Finally we made it out. We'd bet our man to lose, and he hadn't lost. Van Slyck had collected our money. Van Slyck had bet our man wouldn't come in second, and our man hadn't.

"Jerry Huckle broke through and grabbed Pop by the collar, raving like a Wagner opera-singer.

"I bet the cross-eyed drummer that our Derby man would win!" he screamed. "Did you pay him my money, too?"

"Sure," says Hull. "What else could I

do? Your man didn't win, did he? Van Slyck passed the money to the runners, and skipped."

"It's a swindle!"—sings Nobby. "It's a plant! They're all in it—Garrity and Bartholomew and Van Slyck, and the three of them!"

"We didn't pause to reflect on glass-houses and mineralogy, or biters bit, or any such academic considerations; we just led a Santiago charge out of the gate into the road, raging for quick action.

"Sir, you must remember the lay of the land. This road ran east and west, and a mile north of it was the railway, running east and west likewise. There was only one passenger-station for both Derby and Nottingham, and this station was stuck half-way between the towns. So there was the depot, about a mile due north of the gate of the race-course. But you couldn't go direct from the gate to the station by any carriage-road—only by a path, cross lots. And up that path, laughing, we saw our dearly beloveds—Bartholomew and Snapshot Garrity.

"I reckon they'd apprehended a tumult, because they only had their coats hung over their running-clothes and their trousers slung in a scandalous manner around their necks. We hadn't jumped the fence before we heard the express whistling for the curve at the station. Once those fairies were aboard the train, it was all off, and they were moving three yards to our one already. Huckle just rolled on the grass and cried.

"Get a gun!" squawked Nobby Eliot, for the train was in sight and slowing down.

"I was near crazy, too, and I turned around to see if anybody in the scramble had a revolver. But then some one said 'Gang way!' kind of quiet, and an overgrown cannon-ball with legs to it whizzed by me like a fly-wheel.

"Big Dan!" cheered the crowd. "Dan McClintock! Good old Dan!"

"The two misbegotten Filipinos ahead looked back at Dan, and Garrity handed his pocketbook, prompt, to Breeze Bartholomew, the mile-champion of New England.

"Jerusalem the golden, with milk and honey! It was a little up-grade. Barthol-

omew had a start, and spikes, and everything, but you could have played dominos on the tails of Dan's best coat, and I could almost hear him say, 'I'll show em! I'll show 'em!' Where did he get his speed, hey? That's it. Where did he? Norah Murray and a covey of other petticoats were driving along the station-road in a buck-board.

"McClintock yanked down his game plumb on the edge of the platform.

"The crowd yelled, and the girls yelled, and the train-passengers, they yelled, and there was a general oratorio that would have made your ear-drums look like the holes in a ladder.

"Hold 'em, Dan!" yelled the boys, a good ways off. 'We'll hang 'em!'

"But we could just see by the smile of him that he was aiming to prevent a lynching by letting the two ringers board the express. Then Nobby Eliot cut in, making a speaking trumpet of his hands.

"My money, Dan—oh, my money!" he shouts.

"At that there was an argument on the platform, and some pulling and hauling, and the train started. When we limped up, winded, Snapshot and Breeze were aboard and gone, and McClintock, proud as Julius Caesar, gave a parcel of yellow bills to the bookkeeper. The thing hit me like a club.

"Dog-gone your skin!" says I to Eliot. 'Has Dan won that dog-gone green cottage for you, dog-gone it?'

"I was mad, and I shifted away from him while he was busy counting the money.

"The whole of it aint here," he whimpered.

"Never mind, Nobby," I said. 'Lift your eagle eye, Nobby,' I said.

"Over at the end of the platform were Dan and the widow's pretty daughter, and, for all of them, the crowd and us might have been in Peru. She had tucked her arm into his and you could hardly see the back of her shirtwaist for his big hand.

"I guess you wont need the whole of that house-money, Nobby Eliot," says I. 'I guess you're a born loser, anyhow;' and he turned most as green as the cottage, and that's all there is to it."

O'Brien chuckled and reaching for his tobacco pouch proceeded slowly to fill his pipe.

"There aint no moral," he resumed, when he had the hard grains fairly alight, "or if there is, it aint much of a one, being a true story. But I guess maybe it goes to show that—between 'Oh Promise Me' and a girl that has eyes for another than yourself, it's best to stick to pie."

The pipe gurgled and he guffawed a cloud of smoke as blue as the sky.

"And you never saw any of them again?" I asked.

"The ringers?" He shook his head.

"Nor the other?"

"Oh, Van Slyck? We never saw him again. But yonder is Dan's kid. Come here, Norah, to your Uncle Max," concluded Mr. O'Brien to the little girl. "and tell us a story. This gentleman and I are trying to kill time."



The Finish of Miss Fortesque

BY WILLIAM HAMILTON OSBORNE

Author of "For Shorty Cullen's Kids," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY FREDERICK T. MULHAUPT.

TRELAWNEY had proposed—in fact, was just proposing—to Miss Fortesque. Day after day for ten days, at the Inn, she had quivered in the fear of it; night after night, as she and Trelawney trod the shore or walked the graveled paths, her pulses quickened with the thought of it. She wanted to marry James Trelawney. She knew it. It had come; the crisis had been reached. Now that she faced it, she was calm enough. Some woman's instinct held its grip upon her nerves.

"Helen Fortesque," Trelawney said, in that steady, even voice of his—a voice tinged now with just the trace of excitement; a voice with the steadiness of his strength behind it, "you know I love you. I'll do anything to show you that I mean it."

Helen Fortesque leaned back against one of the big white pillars of the Inn. She watched the clouds scudding across the face of the white moon above; she fixed her gaze, for an instant, on the moon's reflection in the water underneath. Then, with wide open eyes, she looked Trelawney squarely in the face.

"You don't have to prove it, Jimmy," she said softly. "There's nothing about me for you to love, except—myself."

Trelawney smiled and flushed. "Don't you think," he answered, "that that is quite enough?"

She nodded.

"I mean," she went on, "that I haven't any money, in the first place. That you know. And as for social position—well, Jimmy, you have the *entrée* to Mrs. Pallet-Searling's, a privilege which I have not. So there's nothing left but just myself."

Trelawney was right. She was enough for any man. Her wonderful eyes would

have been enough—dark eyes that contrasted well with a heavy head of light-brown hair. She was slender, but full throated, full bosomed. And her voice—Yes, she was beautiful, was Helen Fortesque. But there was something beyond her beauty that attracted men—and women, too. She held within her that strange, unnamed, unknown element that men call "magnetism." The lure of it was in her every glance, her every movement, every utterance. Trelawney groaned. He moistened his lips; he laid his right hand upon her hand. She withdrew her hand.

"The trouble is," the girl went on, "whether I like you for yourself. No—wait. I want you to understand. You don't know how much I want to marry you. You don't know, Jimmy, how I've waited and hoped for what you've said to me to-night. You're just the kind of man I've watched and waited for. For the big thing that I like about you, James Trelawney, is not the money you've got, not the social position you've reached. It's something more; it's the thing that earned these things. The thing I like about you, James Trelawney, is success."

Trelawney straightened up, with a start. "But—" he protested.

She stopped him. She went on, in an even tone, almost sing-song in its effect, as if she were repeating an oft-conned lesson.

"I want you to understand, Jimmy. You don't know how I hate failure. In my eyes a man who is a failure isn't a man, somehow. S-u-c-c-e-s-s spells 'red-blood' to me, somehow."

She leaned over in her turn and tapped Trelawney on the back of the hand.

"Jimmy," she went on, "I wouldn't give a hang for a man who had inherited

a fortune. I don't know that I'd give a hang for the man who had made a fortune. But I'd give anything, almost, for the man who was making it, the man whose blood tingled with daily victory. It seems to me that that man is the man for me."

She was young, was Helen Fortesque, or she would never have said these things in just this way. But—Trelawney was the man she meant. She knew it and he knew it.

Trelawney was a self-made man. She knew all about it; had watched him for years. They both lived in Monroe. Trelawney's business was in New York, where he was secretary of the International Woolen Concern. He drew a salary of twenty thousand dollars a year now. In the last few years he had made rapid strides—strides that bewildered even himself, and kept him breathless. And yet, there was but one reason for his success.

"I've carved out my own destiny," he had admitted to Helen Fortesque. He liked to talk about himself. She liked to hear him. It was one of the incidents of success, so it seemed to her. "There are a hundred well known woolen men in the world. I'm one of them. I've stood shoulder to shoulder with the men that have built up the business. I've helped. I've won out, so far. I'm keeping on."

She had never overestimated Trelawney. He was blatant, he was self-centered. She knew it. But how could he help it? He reeked with business-activity, with business-success. He lived in an age when blue blood and high breeding doffed its hat and knelt at the shrine of the self-made man. It was good, it was right, that he should talk about himself. To Helen Fortesque, looking on, it seemed as if the burden of the big business-world rested upon the shoulders of Trelawney. He had thousands of men under him. The men above him—well, he never spoke about the men above him. If he had masters, he never acknowledged it. He was the whole show. And that was a part of success, too, a part that she liked. Yes, Trelawney was her man, so it would seem.

But Trelawney was aghast. "Then,"

he returned, and his voice faltered for the first time, "it isn't for—myself—that you—"

She nodded. "It's because this success is a part of you—because it is you, in fact—that I like you, Jimmy."

"And—and love—" he went on inanely.

Helen Fortesque rose. She stepped into the full light that glowed through the ball-room windows. Inside was melody. Inside was activity. Inside were people. Helen Fortesque moved toward the crowded entrance.

"Come on, Jimmy," she said, "let's go in and have a twostep."

"But," he protested.

She held out her hand to him. "Come," she commanded.

She wanted light, motion, music. Her interview with Jimmy had suddenly, unaccountably, depressed her. A vague uncertainty had seized her. She wanted to get away from herself; she wanted to stop thinking.

"Let's have a twostep, Jimmy," she repeated. "As for the rest, I've got to think it out. I've got to stay awake two nights to decide. Day after to-morrow, Jimmy, I shall—"

They swung lightly into the glare. The eyes of Helen glowed. Her lips were parted. Her face was flushed. She was beauty incarnate on this night. And yet, James Trelawney, looking down into the depths of her dark eyes, searched in vain for what he had hoped to find. An old lady in the far corner nudged her neighbor.

"Well," screamed the old lady, above the blare of the orchestra, "she's caught him, all right, hasn't she?"

The next day it was quite apparent that Helen Fortesque had been awake all night. Her face was pale; the light burned low in her eyes.

"Well?" asked Trelawney, as they dashed out into the country in his big machine.

Helen shook her head. "Not yet," she answered.

The one trouble with Helen Fortesque was that she took herself too seriously. And yet, it was right! It was true. It was

destined to be her salvation, after all. Had she been three years older she might have stopped moralizing; she might have married the first eligible who chanced along; it is the way of the world. But sentiment and romance held her in their sway.

"I'll wait till Mr. Right comes for me," she had told her chums.

That evening, just after dinner, Trelawney sought her hurriedly. He held a telegram in his hands.

"Helen," he said, "I've got to go back to New York for a week. My assistant has sent down a hurry-call for me. We've got to work night and day. It's a big job. We've got to swing it." He stood there awkwardly enough. "Look here, Helen girl," he went on, with a sudden tense appeal in his voice, "I can't go back to New York, until—Look here, Helen, I want my answer now."

Helen flushed. She started to speak. But some hand seemed to clutch at her throat.

"No," she answered, nervously, "wait until you come back. Then you'll get your answer, Jimmy." In her soul she knew that answer would be "Yes." But she didn't say so. She tapped Trelawney lightly on the shoulder. "Good luck," she said. "I know you'll swing that big job in New York."

He pulled out his watch. "I've got twenty minutes," he exclaimed, "shall we take a little stroll."

In the middle of their short stroll, he stopped in astonishment.

"Why," he exclaimed, "there's a man, I know. There's Riggs. Well—well!"

It was Riggs, whoever Riggs might be. Riggs was a shade taller, but a shade younger than Trelawney. In appearance Riggs was well set up—handsome, almost. But he seemed very unobtrusive. He bowed and was passing on, but Trelawney stopped him.

"Miss Fortesque," said Trelawney, "I'm going to introduce to you my dear friend, Riggs. Mr. Riggs—Miss Fortesque. Where are you staying, Riggs?"

Riggs waved his hand. "Over at the Oxford," he returned.

Miss Fortesque took note of it, as she took note of all trifles. The Inn was the

hostelry. The Oxford wasn't. That was the only difference between them. It was just one of those little things that sometimes count.

"I—I couldn't get accommodations at the Inn," stammered Riggs, nervously, as if somehow he felt the difference; "they were full."

Trelawney pulled out his watch. "By George," he said, "I've got to sprint. Can you sprint, Helen? But, no!"

He stopped.

"Miss Fortesque," he said, turning from her to Riggs, "while I'm gone I want you to take good care of Mr. Riggs. He's a good man and he deserves it. Don't you, Riggs?" He looked once more at his watch. "And—it's unconventional as the deuce, but I can't wait. Riggs, I'm going to ask you to take Miss Fortesque back to the Inn."

He stopped, and looked full into the eyes of Helen, seeking something he couldn't find. Then he darted off. As suddenly, he darted back.

"Say, Riggs," he whispered.

They held their heads together for an instant.

"Well," Riggs said enthusiastically, "that's mighty good of you. You can bet I shall. And, many thanks."

In a flash Trelawney had gone for the last time. They stood silent for an instant, watching his receding figure. The toot-toot of a locomotive roused them.

"Mr. Riggs," laughed Helen, "since we don't know each other, save in this sudden sort of manner, I suppose it's up to us to go back to the Inn."

Riggs nodded. "I was on my way up there," he explained, "to see if there was anybody that I knew. Trelawney's mighty good and charitable," he went on. "He's gone away for a week. I'm going to occupy his rooms. What do you think of that?"

"He is good," she admitted, absently.

She was thinking of the big difference between the two men. Trelawney, quick, active, masterful, master of the situation. Riggs, his friend—his poor friend—embarrassed, almost self-effacing, apologetic. Trelawney's chin was in the air. Riggs' rested soberly upon his collar. Yet outwardly, the mere appearance of the



A vague uncertainty had seized her

two men was almost identical. There was an air of gentility that sat well upon each. Upon Trelawney, however, was the hall-mark of success. Upon Riggs—well, Riggs was nice, but—Riggs would do, so long as Trelawney wasn't there.

"I'll take good care of you, Mr. Riggs," smiled Helen Fortesque, with a pleasant, patronizing air.

"Trelawney has mentioned your name to me before," said Riggs, "more than once. He sometimes mentions things to me, when he isn't talking shop."

"Don't you like to hear him talk shop?"

Riggs smiled. "It's a gift, I sometimes think," he laughed. "I often wish I could talk shop. But I can't, so what's the use?"

"You are a great friend of Jimmy's?"

Riggs nodded genially. "We've been friends for some years," he said. "I—I think the world of Trelawney. I—I think, after all, a man's best friends are those who do the most for him. It is the material things that count so much." He hesitated for an instant. "And Trelawney has helped me so very much, so very materially." He did not explain how. But Helen Fortesque told herself that she could understand. Material things meant—money. Trelawney, the success, had helped Riggs, the failure—with money. She understood. It was of a piece with Trelawney's surrender of his rooms at the Inn for Riggs. However, because Riggs was young, hope sat well upon him.

Riggs smiled. "Trelawney, in his time, has done me yeoman's service," he exclaimed, but the biggest thing he ever did, I think, Miss Fortesque, was to place me in your charge to-night."

He said this obvious thing clumsily, but with grace, too. Miss Fortesque laughed and flushed good-naturedly.

"I'll forgive you," she retorted, flashing her dark eyes upon him, "if you can do a twostep as well as he."

Riggs could—and did.

Trelawney, on the fast express, sank back into the soft luxury of the parlor-car chair. To him it still seemed like a luxury, the privilege of riding in a par-

lor-car. Five years before he had not done it. But he liked good things; he liked to spend money; he wanted to enjoy life.

Sitting there, he groaned. A mighty truth was sinking into his soul. There was something money wouldn't buy. It was—love. He wanted love. He had dreamed of it. It was one of the things that success would bring, he had always told himself. He was just beginning to understand—to find out his mistake.

He wanted some woman—he cared not whom she might be, so long as he could love her; some woman who would love him for himself, for his good looks, for the smile on his face, for his gentleness, the affection in his heart, for his soul. He had within him an infinite capacity for loving.

He loved Helen Fortesque for herself, so he told himself; had picked her out because he thought he had seen something in her eyes that was meant for him alone. She had disappointed him. She loved, not him, but the thing he stood for. Poor, and a failure, her regard for him would have been *nil*. He was just. It was not his money she loved. It was his success, and not himself. He didn't like it. He didn't want it that way.

"My Heaven," he wailed, almost in despair, "here I've worked hard all these years to get one thing. I've earned it. It's the only thing in the world I want, and—it's denied me."

Helen was the bride for him. He knew it. Her beauty set his pulses beating. The soft pressure of her warm hand—

He had it out with himself on the way to New York. He looked the thing full in the face. There were plenty of women with beauty, with red lips, with flashing eyes. Helen was one of them. But what he wanted was not beauty; what he wanted was not Helen, but Helen's love. That was the only thing worth while. If he couldn't have that—

Then, suddenly, he was at peace. "Helen Fortesque," he mused, "she shall decide." For he suddenly had come to understand the perplexity that had been in her face; suddenly had known that, of all the women in the world, Helen would be true to herself.

"She won't take me unless she loves me," he assured himself. "If she takes me, I shall have what I have striven for so hard—love. If she doesn't take me, then—" It was a staggering possibility, but he felt his soul responding to it. "If she doesn't take me, I don't want her. What I want is not the woman, but her love."

He didn't say all these things to himself; didn't think them. But he felt them; he knew them. He was all the better for facing them then and there. He reached New York at ten o'clock that night and hastened to the office. The office was ablaze with light. His assistant welcomed him.

"The job is on," said the assistant. "I hope, Mr. Trelawney, you feel like working, that you feel fit."

"As hard as nails," answered Trelawney genially, throwing off his coat.

Riggs and Miss Fortesque slowly paced the veranda at the Inn.

"I agree with you," Riggs was saying, slowly. "I, too, admire success."

They had been talking of Trelawney.

"That was a million-dollar deal that called him to New York," she answered, with enthusiasm, "a million-dollar deal. And he has to swing it. He has to do the work."

Riggs nodded vaguely. "I guess he's equal to it," he admitted. "By the way," he added, "Jimmy says we can run his 'Mastodon,' if we want to." He stopped. "I—I didn't bring mine down," he said, by way of explanation.

The girl glanced at him quizzically. She felt sorry for Riggs—a man who stopped at the Oxford because the Inn was—full; a man who accepted his friend's suite of rooms; a man who left his mythical machine back in New York.

Her pity was genuine, not critical. The man was worth while. Riggs was a man. Underneath his conventional exterior he had genuine courage, genuine worth. He talked well; he had good ideas. And his conversation and his ideas were wonderfully broad and wonderfully liberal. He discussed no deep subjects; he was no topical talker; nor did he waste time on trifles. But as the week progressed she

began to understand that Riggs was a man with a soul above buttons; a man who understood men and women of the day. The striking thing about him was that he never talked about himself. It didn't seem to be modesty; rather it seemed as if it had never occurred to him that self-centered conversation could be worth while. And yet everything he had to say was pleasantly personal. There was nothing vague or abstract about him; it was all concrete—absorbing, somehow.

"Mr. Riggs," said Helen to him one day, "everything you say seems to hit me hard. I don't know how or why. I—you are like an absorbing play. I can't stop listening. I—"

"Thunder," gasped Riggs, "you don't mean to say that I've been talking anything worth while? Why, I've only been listening to you." With a peculiar, nervous gesture, he drew his hand across his forehead. "I've been listening too much to you, Miss Fortesque," he added slowly.

The girl started. For there was a new, disturbing tone in the voice of Riggs—a strange, vibrant, personal appeal. She answered with a flush, and an unsteady stare.

"I—I—" she began.

She could not go on. But she was confronted with an overpowering fact. Riggs was attractive, terribly attractive. She didn't know why. But, all unknown to her, all unknown to Riggs himself, he possessed that strange, irresistible element that lures—the instinct that she, too, possessed—that unknown thing called magnetism. Was it a force that appealed to her alone? She did not know.

Meantime, Riggs was looking at her; he couldn't help it. He couldn't help leaning over and touching her upon the wrist. He didn't know why, either.

The girl covered her face with her hands. She shivered slightly. When her hands dropped to her lap, her face was pale.

"I'm going to tell you about Trelawney," she said to him.

She told him. She knew she had the right to. For, as a sudden flash of lightning in the dead of night makes things



"Who calls it?" he queried

clearer than the day, she had known beyond all peradventure, that Riggs loved her; had known beyond all peradventure that she loved him, for his own sake. And Riggs knew, too. Riggs knew that he, himself was the man; that somehow, on that night, he had stepped forth from the ranks of men, and she from a multitude of women, the one to meet the other; knew that thenceforth they should travel the same road, side by side and hand in hand together. Knowing it, he waved aside everything but this.

"Don't tell me about Trelawney, yet," he pleaded, "tell me about you—and myself."

But it was not for her. It was for him to do the telling—first. He began, tremulously at the start, gathering force as he went on, until finally, by virtue of the sheer strength of her love for the man, Helen unconsciously joined in the recital, and their voices mingled and merged into one ecstatic melody.

When it was all over, he looked again into her eyes and laughed.

"We couldn't help it; that's the whole story, girl, isn't it?"

"We couldn't help it," she admitted, "sudden as it was. We couldn't—" She stopped and laughed in an annoyed sort of way. "Why—why," she faltered, "I don't even know your first name, do I?"

"It's Alexander," he returned.

Helen giggled hysterically. "Alexander," she repeated. She tapped him on the arm. "What a name," she said, merrily, "the name of Riggs is bad enough. But 'Alexander.' It's lucky," she smiled, "that I didn't know your name before—before we found out; isn't it?"

Later he turned to her. "Tell me about Trelawney," he commanded.

She told him. She withheld nothing. She liked success, she admitted. She admired Trelawney, liked Trelawney, had been on the verge of marrying him. But she had never loved him—never could have loved him. For, at the last, she had come to understand that success was only the effect, and not the cause; had come to understand that there is something infinitely finer than mere business-bravery, something infinitely better than success.

"I shall always admire Trelawney,"

she told Alexander Riggs; "I shall always love you. It seems trite and commonplace to say it, but I'd rather be poor and even miserable, with you, than rich and happy with the best and most successful man on earth."

"What worries me, just now—" said Alexander Riggs remorsefully, "the only thing that worries me, is that I've got to make my peace with Jim Trelawney when he comes back to-morrow. We couldn't help what happened. And, yet, Jim Trelawney is a mighty good friend of mine. He'll never forgive me, I'm afraid."

She touched him softly. "We couldn't help it," she reiterated; "isn't that enough. I'll explain to Jim Trelawney. He'll understand, I'm sure."

It so happened, however, that Alexander Riggs saw Trelawney first. He met him on the late afternoon-train the next day, and told him all about it.

"Now, you can say anything you please, Jim," he said, contritely, "or do anything you please. Kick me all around the station, if you want to. But it's done. Honestly, I couldn't help it. Nor could she."

A sigh broke from the lips of James Trelawney.

"Riggs," he said, "it's all right. I can't say I'm glad of it, but I can say that I'm glad Helen Fortesque found out before—before it was too late. Grant me one favor. I want you to tell me all about it. All—all, now, mind."

Right there in the station, Trelawney held Riggs to a seat while Riggs told the story in a stammering voice. Trelawney's eyes grew wide and wider.

"Why—why," he gasped, "is that the truth? Did it happen just in that way? Sure?" He shook with sudden laughter. "That girl's true blue, Riggs," he said. "By George, I envy you. I wish I were in your shoes."

Riggs grew serious and two little wrinkles gathered just above his eyes.

"By the way, Trelawney," he asked, "how did you come out on that big job, the million-dollar job, as—as Helen calls it?"

Trelawney put his hand to his ear. "Who calls it?" he queried.

"Helen."

Trelawney sank into a seat. "Great Scott," he exclaimed, "you certainly have worked fast!"

"How did the job pan out?" persisted Riggs, the wrinkles still in evidence.

"Straight as a string," responded Jim Trelawney.

"Well," said Trelawney to Helen Fortesque, after Helen had finished her recital, as they sat alone—in broad daylight this time—in one corner of the veranda, "I'm not surprised. You haven't changed your views. You still like success."

"I admire it," she protested.

"I guess, Helen—" went on Trelawney.

"What?" she exclaimed.

"I guess, Helen Fortesque, that you not only like success and admire success. I think you love success as well."

"What—" she began.

But he waved her aside.

"It's funny," he proceeded. "I told you once that I stood shoulder to shoulder with the big woolen men in the world; that I was one of a hundred big men. You remember that? I told you that I was the Secretary of the International Woolen Concern and had helped to build it up. I talked a lot about myself. But

there were others I forgot. There's another man who isn't Secretary of the International. He isn't one of a hundred men; he didn't help to build up the International Concern. No! That man," he added, impressively, "is the President of the International Concern. He made it himself. That man is not one of the greatest woolen men in the world to-day. He's the greatest woolen man in the solar system. That man is Alexander J. Riggs, the man you are about to marry. That man's life spells one thing in capital, illuminated letters—the thing it spells is 'Unqualified Success.' He's a man in a million, and all the more so, because he's got you, Helen Fortesque. Oh, you worshiper of idols!"

Helen Fortesque clutched at a pillar.

"But—but—" she protested, "I never knew—I—"

Now Trelawney knew she never knew. But he had an account to settle with her. He settled it.

"It doesn't make any difference whether you knew or not," he answered. "Alexander J. Riggs thinks you knew all right."

"Just wanted to give her something to talk about with Riggs," he told himself, genially, as he strolled away and lit a cigar.

The Decision

BY REM A. JOHNSTON

ILLUSTRATED BY ETHEL L. COE

THE letter fell to the veranda-step and rustled there gently in the June breeze like some living thing. Uncle Jimmy did not heed it. He was looking through the distance, across his peaceful eighty acres, into the nothingness that restores the past. A robin warbled in the elm at the lawn-gate, and a thousand sparrows chattered noisily in the deep barnyard nearby. Beyond the second meadow his son worked—and sang—in the tender corn. It was the sort of a day

when great things could happen—when questions of large importance could be dealt with best by following inner impulses. There seemed to be an other-world sheen on everything—as if life had paused to listen, or to rest, before it trudged on with its burden.

Something of this worked in Uncle Jimmy's blood like strange fire.

"Forty year back it was diff'runt," he acknowledged to himself. "They was more trees, an' swamp, an' snakes on this

patch 'n I ever see any place before or sence, an' they was a mor'gage about as big as a ten acre field plastered all over the hull thing. Nope—it's surely diff'runt now."

The letter on the floor rippled noticeably, fluttered over till it lay face up, staring incontinently at the old farmer.

"But it 'pears like they lived better then, an' had more genuine progress. An' there was the spellin' schools. I aint never see 'em beat sence. I 'low them old spellin's was the same as a lib'ral education now. I met 'm'am' first at one of 'em over on Blue Ridge—th' night I put ten schools down. I never see anybody before that looked so good to me as she did. I seemed to sort o' melt all up inside. Pshaw! I guess they aint improved on beauty none sence then."

There was silence for a little, as Uncle Jimmy looked over the past that was sweetest to him of all his three score years and ten.

"It was hard just at first and it didn't git easier fer a long time, but somehow I managed t' make it go. I told 'm'am' there was big money in hog-raisin'. I says to her, "'M'am," I kin make enough t' buy you that red dress you liked.' I went on tellin' her what I'd git fer her—an'—now it looks 'sif I didn't never do nothin' fer her. 'M'am'—"

"'M'am' had been in another—a far—country for ten years, and Uncle Jimmy's eyes bleared momentarily. The time he told "m'am" of the things he would do for her was in the heyday of his youth, when new life was singing in every bounding pulse and the young wife was at his side, sweet, modest, and neat as a primrose.

He had worked hard all the long years that followed his happy mating. Sunshine, tears, and toil made up the daily round. He had "lifted" the mortgage, drained the swamp, cleared away the forest, built a comfortable house in which to live. Often the "times" and the debts had menaced him so that his courage was at the breaking-point. But he had always held on. Uncle Jimmy wasn't the kind of a man to let go—Fate had to sort of yank him loose.

And when the babies came he watched

them tenderly, till the Good Lord saw that he must be tested—and so took them away, one by one, leaving Uncle Jimmy desolate though steadfast and faithful. Not for always, however, for a son came at last to be a blessing to "pap'" an' "m'am."

Thus it ran through young manhood to middle-age, and on into the time when no man can work because eyes are dim and feet too heavy. Finally the day came when "m'am," with the smile of that last, keen, still delight on her worn face, bade them good-by.

It was after this that wisdom knocked at the door of Uncle Jimmy's heart—when he really began to see that there was purpose in the Great Plan, and something better behind than all the worldly emoluments he had tried to win for mother and son before the former fell asleep.

The long decades when he had fought for worldly prosperity, when he had bought and sold shrewdly, when he was very keen on rate percents—ran through his brain like shadows. What had he sought, anyway? He had been happiest long ago, when his first babe prattled on his lap and "m'am" listened to his stories of worldly success to be won from the swamps for her and the little one.

It was not difficult, in the haze of the June day, to make out her form still there, nodding and smiling, and to hear her voice—he had learned the trick of that, too.

"It's pretty, 'pap',—it's jist pretty. But you know all I want is you an' baby—all I need is jist you'uns. If I c'd wish fer any gift it wouldn't be money. 'Pap', I think you're thataway too much. It's better to be content 'n rich. An' if anybody ever was to offer me a fortune, er my baby a fortune, I'd give it away before I let one cent in to spoil the joy o' life. Mind that, 'pap'.' Joy is somethin' that comes from th' inside. If ever I had th' chance to give a big gift to my baby it would be a good woman an' not a lot o' fools'-gold. Oh, 'pap', jist be happy with us—fer all we want is you!"

Her voice was surely in his ear now as then—simple, patient, sweet. The little vibrant softness shook him as it did in the

dim long ago. He nodded his head, winked, nodded. The robin ceased singing, the sparrows flew away, the breeze was still. Something was happening.

As Uncle Jimmy stooped from his bedtied rocker to pick up the neglected letter at his feet, a wet, warm drop of water, clear as the crystal of the New Jerusalem, fell on the sheet of paper.

"Trust an old man fer bein' a fool," he remarked ashamedly. "Aint I got no faith in th' Good Man no more? Don't I know He sends her back jist fer this, 'cause I'm always fergittin'? I know where happiness is. It's where the heart is. An' it aint in money, an' it aint in big cities, an' it aint even on a farm where a body kin be close to God if he's a mind to—it aint none of them places 'less th' heart's there, too. It aint the Symbol but th' thing itself that counts—not money. Huh-uh!"

He looked down across the meadow to the corn-field. The son was working his way blithely along. Every movement of the well-trained, supple youth spoke of that contentment which comes from close touch with Nature.

"I be'n pretty well satisfied on th' hull. When I had to have things they jist come. God aint never 'peared to neglect me. Mebbe if I'd be'n rich He'd 'a' left me to hustle fer myself in other ways, an' I might 'a' missed bein' happy.

"I got a hard thing to settle to-day. It's too hard fer a poor old man like me. How do I know what's best? God knows I want to give every thing to my boy that's good fer him. But he aint spoiled now—an' he aint a-goin' to be 'f I kin help it.

"Mebbe if I do take what's comin' he'll go out o' his head like I see some o' 'em do—an' then he'd better be dead—a good deal better be dead—

"Here's a letter that would 'a' druv' me clean wild once. I mind when little Marcella had a strange disorder none o' the home-doctors could understand. I wanted a specialist from Civil City, but he wouldn't come 'less the money was in sight—an' I couldn't show it. She died. 'Course she'd 'a' died anyway, but I didn't think so then. I'd a mor'gaged my immortal soul to 'a' got this letter then."

He folded the important paper between his work-thin, age-scarred fingers, squinting at the postmark through silver-bowed glasses.

"There's a powerful lot o' business in them ten lines o' typewritin'," he ran on. "Where is the boy? I see him down in th' corner lettin' th' horses blow. He's whislin'. Always was a great hand at music o' that kind. Mind how he whis'led when he come back from Chicago that time. 'Gee!' he says, 'it is great to be back where a feller kin laugh out loud ag'in. If I live to be a thousand,' he says, 'I don't want no more city fer me.' "

The letter fluttered and crinkled in the old man's hands. Absently he folded and refolded the single sheet.

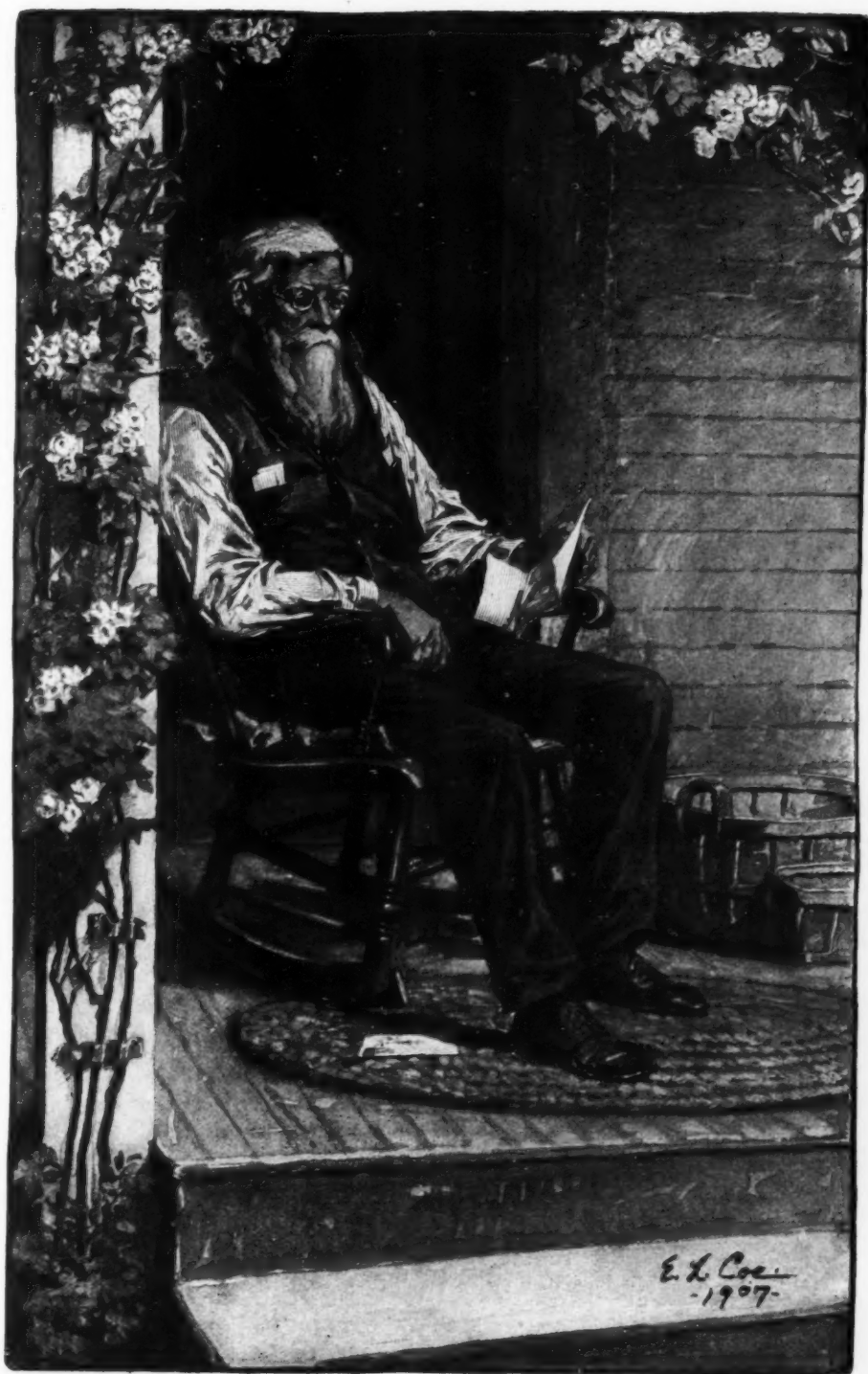
"I wonder what would be right an' kindness to the boy anyhow? I got eighty acres, an' some money in the bank—all his. Aint it enough?" The voice of Uncle Jimmy's experience said, "It's so easy to lose a feller's satisfaction in little things when he's young an' ambitious."

And still the letter rustled and complained in his fingers. Even an inquisitive fowl from the barnyard leaped up on the veranda and pecked insultingly at it.

"He was the keenest baby I ever see," mused Uncle Jimmy with the irrelevance of age. "An' nothin' ever spoiled him. Wouldn't go to college 'cause he said I couldn't take keer o' myself sence 'm'am' left me. Never would go out nights neither. Always be'n contented an' satisfied. Liked his books here—an' I didn't deny him 'em. Liked to read here best. 'Pears like his heart's here, don't it?"

Again he drowsed. The flies droned in the air. The old man felt the summer steal into his blood and linger there in trembling joy. A bliss that he could not describe flooded his whole life, and he seemed to swing out into Eternity like a golden bubble in a sea of light. His thoughts were all the same—if he signed the document that would bring his son a fortune might he not rob the boy of his chance at real happiness, set up within him a love for the world, put him out of tune with the Infinite?

"He's my boy," cried Uncle Jimmy fiercely. "I aint goin' t' take no chances. I don't keer if it does look foolish!"



"Here's a letter that would 'a' druv' me clean wild once"

He put the letter back in his pocket and waited for the whistle that came up the lane.

"I got good news, 'dad,'" called the youth.

He let the horses drink at the tank, then slapped them gently along into the barn with the tenderness one rarely sees away from the farm.

"I got good news," he repeated with the eagerness of the unspoiled.

But Uncle Jimmy did not understand. He took the letter out of his pocket and peered through its crimped lines once more.

"Happiness is where the heart is," muttered the old man, repeating and repeating, "an' that's where fortune is. Money aint nothin'—I say!"

The boy came slowly up through the barnyard, scattering the chickens and putting the birds to flight. On his face was a great light. His lips were quivering slightly, like a girl's when she is very happy—youth and maid are the same in matters of the heart unless they are both old in the sins and griefs of the world—and he was humming a tune that sounded like a hymn. His steps were quick even after the day's labor. Work had not yet bent and rounded his shoulders.

Something stabbed Uncle Jimmy. That loved form would bow under tasks severe, and labor too hard. In twenty years the boy would be a stooping wreck, with limbs twisted—he would be a worn out old man, or on the road to such an estate. Farm labor was hard on the body though it may be reckoned good for the soul. And yet which would be better on the whole?

Uncle Jimmy got up, stiffly.

"I'm rheumatic to-day," he explained. "What's your news, son? Let's hurry. I got t' do up my chores. That there little heifer kicked a lung out o' me last night. I can't see good no more. Ouch! Oh, I'm gittin' old, son. What is your news?"

The boy looked away. "Annie Murray, the girl you said was so much like mother used to be—Annie Murray and I—we're goin' to be married. And if you want us we're goin' to stop right on here at the old place."

"I wonder!" remarked Uncle Jimmy

softly. "She wasn't only a baby yisterday. Goin' to marry Annie Murray, son? Wal—wal—"

"Isn't it news—good news?"

The old man nodded absently.

"I'll be glad to have you," he said after a moment. "All I got is yours—an' I got enough, aint I?" He turned sharply.

"Annie and I'd rather live here than be rich as blazes any place else. If we had to live in a city and give all this up—that would be awful."

"But will you allus think that way?" the old man urged doubtfully.

The confidence of happy, all-believing youth replied:

"I don't ask anything better."

Uncle Jimmy yawned, and squared his shoulders.

"I've wasted the hull afternoon thinkin'. Let's do up them chores. Did the corn plow hard?"

"It did. Say, I guess I'll put it in wheat next season," the son said, as if to himself. "I got to get it into something that will make money."

On Uncle Jimmy's face a quick shadow came. And the voice of the afternoon rang in his ears.

"That's th' old road—th' one that takes so long to git any place. Why ask a boy that's raised in th' swamp if he likes th' sea? What does a child know about it when he's had no chance to know? What he kin do fer himself he must find out fer himself. What you kin do fer him belongs to you."

"It would be great to have money without bothering to make it, wouldn't it?" the boy's voice recalled him.

Uncle Jimmy hesitated no longer, but began to tear the paper he carried in his hand—first in strips and then in checks and then in bits. He worked quickly, breathlessly, as if something might happen before he completed his task.

"I don't know," he answered his son's question decisively. "I never had any o' that kind an' I guess you wont. Let's do them chores."

The son laughed gleefully, "I got Annie Murray," he told himself. "She's the same as gold to me."

On two thankful faces the westering sun shone tenderly.

In the Light of Understanding

BY JOHN S. LOPEZ

ILLUSTRATED BY ADOLPH TREIDLER

FIRST, I think it was sheer panic at the prospect of banishment from one's own kind that drove us together. At any rate, I never encountered a more heterogeneous, impossible herd than made up the passenger-list on that trip. Even before "All ashore" had been called, I had mentally sifted down to Norling as my only possible hope of human companionship. He told me afterwards, in that frank, spontaneous way of his, that he had come to the same conclusion regarding me, which probably accounts for the fact that before the first day was over we had slid into a delightful and exclusive partnership for escaping boredom. Even before we realized it, he was calling me "Johnson, old boy!" and I had affectionately shortened his name to "Dickie!" I gathered that a belated attack of ambition had started him on the road to a useful business-career. The last had to do with sugar, his father being in the refinery business in Philadelphia. This Hawaiian trip was the first parental let-in on the career.

Our mutual esteem was still running high as we leaned over the rail, watching Honolulu grow up out of the perspective, and were laying our plans for the first day ashore. It was an old story to me, but I had plenty of amusement explaining the harbor-sights to Norling, until a bevy of information-hungry old maids fell upon me as an animated Stoddard lecture, and pestered me with questions. Finally we managed to disentangle ourselves without brutality, and shifted forward.

By this time harbor-activity was focusing upon us, the arrival of the big passenger-ships being a rather important happening. Whistles were tooting a welcome, tugs were dancing over the water, and all the bumboats and small predatory craft of the harbor were drawing in on us

like a swarm of hungry flies. It was a scene that always interested me. While I was watching two old Chinamen in a sampan-like ark, and trying to figure out how they managed to keep afloat, Norling gave a sudden tug at my arm.

"Someone in the boat over there is trying to attract your attention, I think," he said.

Surely enough, it was. I looked over toward the trim cutter, manned by blue-jackets, and in the sternsheets discerned one of my boon familiars, Lieut. Bobby Nicholson, of the *Brooklyn*, which had been lying around Honolulu a good while. Manifestly, Bobby was shouting and making frantic signs, but they were about as informing as the gestures of a crab. I couldn't hear above the din. But I did some noncommittal wig-wagging myself, realizing that he wouldn't understand, either, and that he couldn't say I had slighted him. Bobby is so sensitive.

Within a few minutes we had warped into the dock. Thanks to the wheels of my experience, oiled with some coin of the realm, we soon had our hand-luggage ashore and were pushing our way to safety through the regiment of professional assisters. Old Wah Sing, the obsequious porter of the hotel where I always stay, singled me out and fell upon me with two of his pigtailed underlings. It was in our plans to walk and stretch our legs, so we surrendered the bags forthwith and started up leisurely. That is why we found Bobby Nicholson standing impatiently in front of the hotel when we got there. He had ridden.

"I'm in an awful rush," he sputtered, after he had metaphorically fallen on my neck and had been introduced to Norling. "Came to tell you to be sure to be at the blow-out at the American Club tonight. Bring your friend. Sure to have a

bully time. It's in honor of the officers of the British cruiser *Dolphin* that's in port. Didn't know you'd be back or I'd have sent you invites. Good thing I saw you from the cutter. Well, so long. See you later. I'll be late for duty."

He was off with a rush almost before we had time to call our farewells. Then, suddenly, he wheeled in the center of the driveway, and shading his eyes from the sun called back:

"I forgot to tell you your friend, Drewit, got back to town yesterday from Wailuku."

"Is he—" I began, starting after him, but he anticipated my query and called over his shoulder half-mockingly, half-pityingly:

"Yes, he is; worse than ever."

Then he was gone.

My face must have betrayed the sickening wrench at my heart. As I turned to Norling, who had heard the whole conversation, he laid his hand on my arm sympathetically.

"Is it—" he said softly, "is it someone you care for?"

Usually I don't discuss the weaknesses of my friends, but something in Norling's personality made me sure that confidence, in this case would be no betrayal. So I told him the truth. Sidney Drewit and I had been boyhood chums in the states: chums through school, and then, years after, had picked up the thread of our friendship again in Honolulu. I told him of the ambitions and bright prospects of Drewit which, suddenly, a year before, he had overturned and cast aside like an empty cup. Since then he had been drinking himself to death: literally going to the devil and seeming to glory only in the downward progress.

"But with it all he has been a gentleman," I explained, "and that is why we, who knew him best, have stuck to him, hoping, almost down to the vanishing-point of hope, there would come a turn."

"But why," asked Norling compassionately, "has he done it?"

"A woman," I rejoined. "Yes, a woman was the cause, although he has never mentioned it even to me. He had been engaged to a girl in the States, but

after he set out to perdition he never spoke of her."

"Poor chap, poor chap!" said Norling softly. "We must do something for him; there may have been a mistake."

I thought no less of him for the undisguised tears in his eyes.

"You can't understand how it affects me," he continued in a broken voice. "You do not know that a good woman saved me from almost what he is. And he, poor fellow, has been dragged down from what I hope to be, by another woman's influence. Let us try together to set him on the back trail."

We shook hands on that.

Among the Americans at the club that evening was Drewit, and I saw at a glance he had aged ten years in the six months since I had last seen him. Outwardly, at least, he was as buoyant and garrulous and merry as any of the others, but I knew the reason for this. It was written plain in the flushed face and the thick voice and the hectic gleam in the eyes. And the greatest change of all was in the eyes. They were defiant—resigned—eager, all at once. Defiant, as if he had peered over the edge of horror so long contempt had replaced fear; resigned, as of one who had probed deeply into hope and knew, at last, it was dead; eager, like those of an animal at bay who invites the final attack. And now he had lost hold of himself. I saw for the first time that Drewit's was a weak face, had always been a weak face, but that I had been deceived because it was plastic to good or bad influences.

He must have known his eyes betrayed him and was ashamed, because he kept them shifting even when he greeted me with hollow imitation of his old cordiality. It seemed he preferred to be with strangers. Norling met him and exchanged a few commonplace remarks—all that was possible. But for a while afterward, his eyes sought mine from time to time sympathetically, as Drewit kept one of the Chinese waiters almost exclusively busy serving him with drinks—big drinks—he tossed off raw, mechanically, without a wince.

Later in the evening he came over to



The harbor-activity was focusing upon us

where Norling and I were hobnobbing with a couple of my intimates—Drewit's intimates, too, including Nicholson. Apparently Drewit was sober, but it struck me, ominously, it would have been better if he had not been, after the brandy he had drunk. He was frankly cheerful and most of the tenseness had gone from his face. And so, crony-like, exhilarated to forgetfulness by the mirthful scene, the music, and perhaps by the punch that was flowing, our party sought seclusion in a little room off the reception-hall. Then there were stories and jokes, and finally, as men will afar from home, we reached the toasts.

Bobby Nicholson led off with a panygeric to "The Navy." Dixon, who had succeeded in the colony, toasted "Fair Honolulu," and someone toasted "God's Own Country." Finally someone called on Norling. He sprang to his feet enthusiastically, forgetful of everything but the invisible bonds drawing his best thoughts to the States. He raised his glass.

"To woman—" he cried, "God's best gift to man!"

We were standing, glasses uplifted, ready to complete the ceremony, when I saw a peculiar change come suddenly over Drewit's face. With a curse he hurled his glass from him and its contents spread over the white cloth like splotches of blood. Then he wheeled fiercely and shouted with almost maniacal fury:

"That for women! all of them!"

Quicker than the eye could follow, a flush dyed Norling's face, and before we could prevent, he had struck Drewit full between the eyes. Then we got between them. Not that it was necessary though, because Drewit only sank to his seat and held his hand to the livid welt on his forehead. The old look of furtive despair had come back into his eyes. It struck me as almost disappointing that he had not resented the blow—he, once so high-spirited, had sunk, through his excesses, to a craven weakling. But common-sense triumphed, and I realized, that if we could avoid scandal the thing must be patched up. Besides, my heart ached for both men: for Drewit, that he

had been humiliated, justly though it was; for Norling, because his reason had resumed sway and he was suffering from the sting of remorse at having sacrificed any hope of helping the man he pitied. Drewit was looking at me appealingly, and it suggested a solution for the time being.

"Come on, Drewit," I said, "and you, Norling—you are both my friends—let's walk out into the cool night-air together. It will clear our heads and show us what fools we can make of ourselves."

It struck me as strange that Drewit needed little persuasion, although Norling, openly repentant, seconded the appeal. Not one of us spoke until we had walked far up the deserted street. It was Norling, at last, who broke the silence.

"I am a brute and a cad," he said to Drewit; "not fit to associate with gentlemen, and I ask you to forgive me. I will apologize publicly."

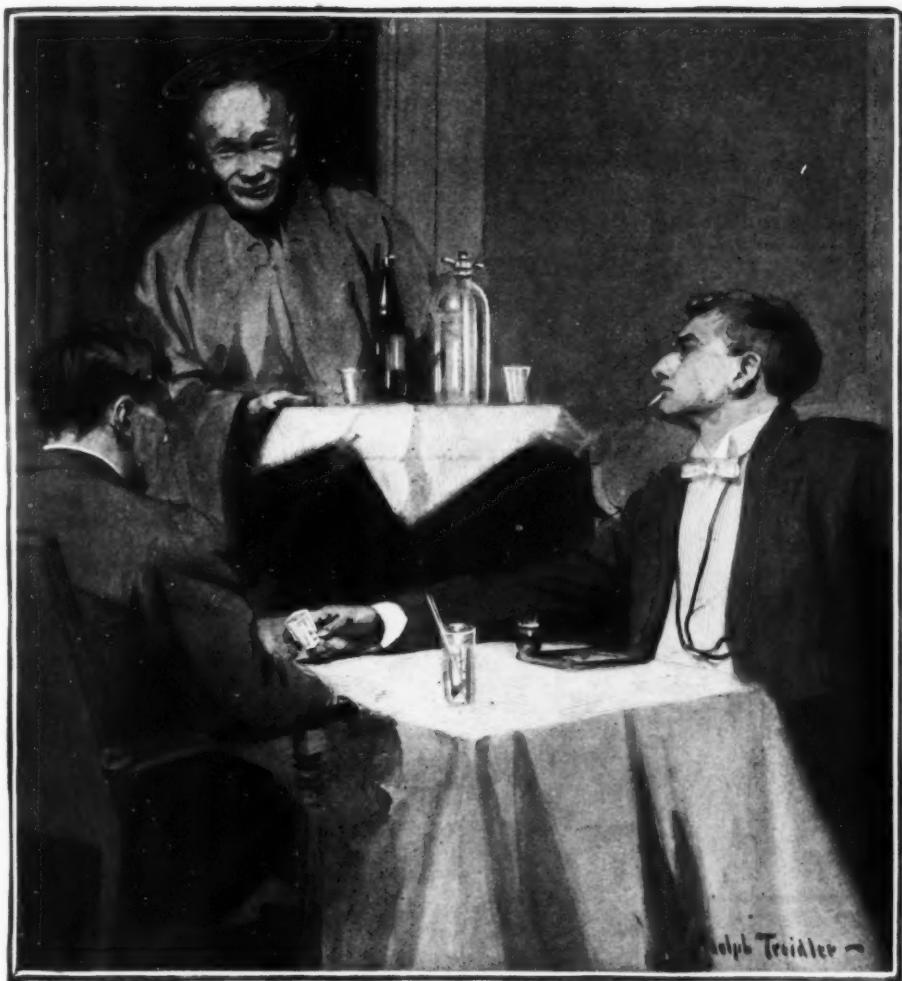
"It was my own fault," rejoined Drewit dully.

"No," said Norling, "you did not understand my feelings, and I want you to know, so you can forgive me."

"When I left the States it was with a strong heart because, waiting for me to return, is a good woman whom I love and who loves me. Every thing I do, every thought I have, every throb of my heart, is an offering to her. And to-night I have done something that would give her pain. But your words threw my mind off its balance, because this woman has been my salvation, my good angel. Before she came into my life I was a thing to be scorned, a dissolute disgrace to my people. And then it seemed as if God had sent her to stoop down and lift me up. That I have fought my way back to self-respecting manhood is due to her—alone. So, for her sake, I cannot do otherwise than worship all women as angels of salvation."

Drewit turned and placed his hand on Norling's shoulder.

"My boy—" he began—and then he paused as if in search of words. The fatherly tone did not seem incongruous, although in years he was slightly younger than Norling.



Drewit kept one of the Chinese waiters almost exclusively busy

"My boy," he repeated, "it is I who should ask forgiveness of you. To-night has shown me there are two sides to every shield; and I must show you mine, so you will understand my bitterness, and at the same time value the love of that good woman—back in the States. I have never spoken before, and I need not ask you to respect my confidence."

Norling and I simply nodded.

"To make the thing clear," continued Drewit, his voice hard and dry, "you should know that I once felt toward a woman as you feel—now. I placed her

so high in my heart she seemed to me the well-spring of everything in the world that was good and true and worth a man's best effort. She was my salvation. I was too poor to marry then, and so I came out here, and struggled, and denied myself—God only knows how much—and then when the goal seemed just within my reach, when I thought I had won my happiness, I found I had been worshipping a hollow mockery."

Drewit stopped and shuddered, drawing his hand across his eyes in a dazed sort of way, while we waited in painful

silence. At last he pulled himself together.

"She wrote me she could not marry me; that she was engaged to another man," he continued in a colorless monotone. "If she had loved the man, I could

inflicted. She was incapable of understanding that she shattered more than my hope of happiness with her—that she was poisoning my very soul against life itself. And it was to this I had given my best—this woman who deliberately sold herself to the highest bidder. I tried to be interested in other things, but the bottom seemed to have pretty well dropped out for me. And that is why I have never gone back. In a colony one may go to perdition without causing scandal."

He gave way to a burst of mirthless laughter. It was Norling who spoke in an awed tone.

"You should have gone back," he said, "There may have been a mistake. Loving like that, I cannot understand why you surrendered so easily."

"There was no mistake," said Drewit calmly. "I wrote several frantic letters and received one reply that banished all doubt. I think I will read it aloud; it will convince even you."

He fumbled in his wallet. Then he held up the letter so the bright light from the moon fell upon it.

The date he read was of a year before.

He began in a clear, even, voice:

MY OWN SWEETHEART, SID:

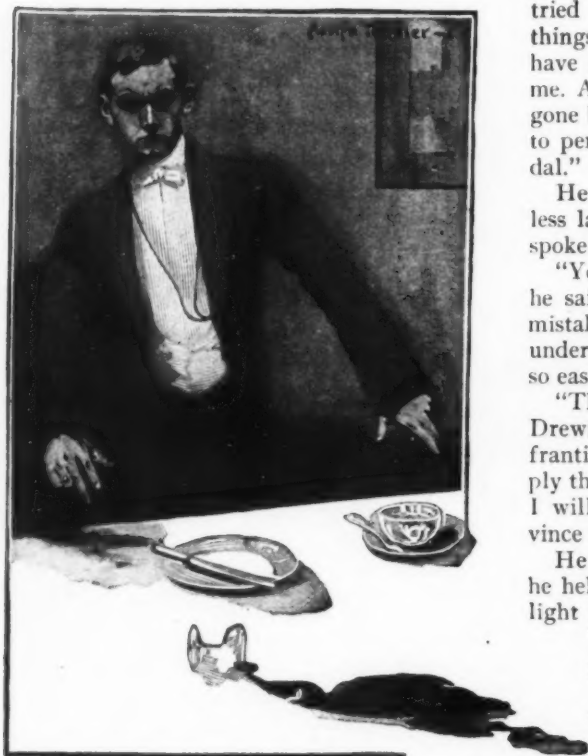
It is hard for us both.

But what I wrote before is true. And all the time I love you, dearest; love you as I shall never love another. I know I am spoiled, and selfish, and weak; but, weighing in the balance against your love are wealth, position, luxury—and I cannot give them up—all that my soul craves—except you. But you must not rebel, dearest—you will forget—"

Drewit paused.

"Forget!" he muttered half to himself. "Forget!"

From the club-house in the distance, through the stillness of the night, came the strains of an air the band from the cruiser was playing, and borne clearly down the cool night-breeze we could



"That for women! All of them!"

have forgiven her, because I loved her enough to know what love does to one. But she did not even allow me to retain my respect for her; that was the worst of all.

"It was ambition, selfishness, feminine vanity, that actuated her. Calmly, with a cool kindness, she wrote me she loved me better than the man she was going to marry but that he was rich and I was not. Every moment, she said, even while she was with this man, enjoying the luxury she was too weak to refuse, her heart would be with me. According to her standard, she regarded this confession as a balm for the wound she had

distinguish the melody—"Then You'll Remember Me."

"Listen!" said Drewit, with a laugh that snapped like a whiplash. "Her favorite song! She sang it the night we parted, and she gave me a bunch of forget-me-nots—her flower."

Norling started, as if to speak, apparently, but Drewit began to read again:

....This man I am to marry I cannot even respect. He is vulgar—even vulgarly rich; that is, his father is, and he will get it all. But I have stirred up unnecessary ambition in him so he would not always be dangling at my side, a living punishment for my worldliness.

He has been a good-for-nothing, with mean tastes and instincts. You may judge when I say that he has, tattooed on his arm, the picture of a prize-fighter. I tell you these things, so you will pity me. Once, during a carouse in New York, he shot a man, and barely escaped punishment. I have nicknamed him "The Savage"—he thinks from affection, being too much of a fool to suspect the truth—

A low groan from Norling caused us to turn quickly. He had staggered back against a tree.

"What's the matter, Dickie?" I cried. "Are you ill?"

"No," he said tremulously, only fighting with myself against belief in what I

attacked Drewit for saying to-night."

He drew himself up, half-heartedly, like a man that has perforce determined to face some crisis that spells ruin for him.

He pulled up the sleeve of his coat and shirt, baring his arm.

"Look!" he cried. "Do you see the picture of Fitzsimmons tattooed on my arm? When I left she sang her favorite song—"Then You'll Remember Me"—and she gave me a cluster of forget-me-nots as a token of faithfulness. She nicknamed me 'The Savage,' because I was a good-for-nothing and shot a man, as she described. Because I am so vulgarly rich she takes me, although she loves Drewit."

He plunged his hand into his breast-pocket, and from the packet he produced tore out a bunch of withered blossoms.

"See!" he cried throwing them on the ground, "I am going to stamp her out of my heart as I do these under my feet."

It was Drewit who placed his arm around Norling's shoulders with a masterful tenderness.

"Don't!" he pleaded gently. "Don't lose your hold, as I did. I was a fool; you made me see that to-night. We understand each other—you and I—we must fight it out together."

On the Middendorf Glacier

BY ALBERT DORRINGTON

THE man had arrived at last for whom the world had long waited. After an absence of three years he had returned alone from Franz Josef Land to England. But the news of his achievement had preceded him, and the world stood ready to reward and honor the man who had forced his way to the uttermost limits of the Arctic Circle.

Already the name of Lieutenant Clifford Penross burned on that sharp pinnacle which Peary, McClintock, and Nansen, had striven to attain. His victory over the great ice-barriers had been

won at a terrible cost of life and suffering. Of the eighteen men who had accompanied him all had perished. It was to the captain of the whaling-ship, *Cedric*, he owed his ultimate release from the ice-pack.

Six months after his departure from Spitzbergen, on his way north, another expedition, under the command of Markham Blane, started from Parry Islands with the intention of reaching the Pole. Blane was an American millionaire with unlimited resources at his disposal. At McClintock Island he left his vessel, the

President, in charge of his first officer, and pushed north, accompanied by eight men and sledges. After waiting for two years, the *President* returned to Alaska without Markam. Thereafter his name was added to the long list of Arctic tragedies, and people wondered how men of his kind could be lured to death by the voices of the polar sirens.

Penross' regret at the fate of the American expedition was evidenced by his desire to visit Blane's relatives in New York, and bid them hold out hope of his return even against the immutable silence of the North.

In England honors fell thick upon Lieutenant Penross. The freedom of the City of London was conferred upon him, and the Royal Geographical Society rewarded his achievement with a grant of £8,000. Bequests from European and American scientific-bodies poured in, and Penross accepted the gifts, not too eagerly, but as one who had attained the uttermost human goal.

A year after he arrived in England he received a letter from Maxim Blane, the only son of the missing American explorer. Penross, seated in his study, stared curiously at the boyish handwriting, the firm down-strokes denoting, to him, courage and determination.

The November afternoon had somehow chilled and depressed him, inured as he was to the polar wind-sheds and bleak summits of the Northern glaciers. The thought of the boy's father, buried in some wind-swept moraine or snow-filled crevasse, flashed somberly across his mind, and his mouth tightened a little as he put aside young Blane's letter.

Of late Penross had often shown signs of impatience, when scientists demanded so definitely the endless details and reiterated accounts of his successful dash to the pole. Even the publication of his book, "The Conquered North," which explained the minutest proceedings in connection with the expedition, failed to quench their desire for more and yet more information.

Why had young Maxim Blane sent for him? The constant coupling of his name with that of the ill-fated American explorer, was beginning to annoy him. Peo-

ple—the kind who rarely looked at maps—were continually asking if he had met or crossed Markam Blane's party within the vicinity of the polar-basin.

And now—Penross took up the letter again—here was the son of the lost explorer inviting him to his house, presumably to ask him the same old question:

"Do you think my father is still alive, lieutenant?"

Placing the letter in his pocket, he rose from his desk, as if overcome by a strange desire to see and stand before the boy whose father had failed so tragically in his bid for immortality.

In the street he breathed a little freely, as he passed to a hansom standing at the corner of the road. He gave the driver young Blane's address and sat back with the letter once more in his hand.

DEAR LIEUTENANT PENROSS,

Would you care to dine with the son of an unfortunate Arctic explorer? I arrived in London only yesterday.

MAXIM BLANE.

Surely there was nothing in so brief a note to excite anger or annoyance. Yet Penross was annoyed; a look of sharp mistrust came into his eyes, as if some awkward, unforeseen incident were about to enter his life.

The cab turned into a square lit at each end by an electric-lamp. Alighting swiftly, Penross approached the entrance of a newly decorated mansion and touched the bell. A few moments later he was ushered into a reception-room which bore traces of the owner's exquisite taste in artware and pictures.

Standing somewhat ill-at-ease in the center of the room he found himself bowing slightly to a tall, athletic youngster in evening-dress. Something throbbed in the throat of Lieutenant Penross as he glanced at the sunburnt young face.

For a period of six heart-beats, the two men appeared to regard each other with the air of swordsmen at play. The young American was first to cap the silence with a laugh.

"Lieutenant Penross," he said, in the slow, basking voice of a Southerner, "I've waited nearly a year to meet you. Pray come into another room, and excuse my

American manners. Some difficulty in getting servants," he went on as Penross followed him into a large dining-hall. "My valet engaged the house some months ago, but quite overlooked the flunkey element."

Penross drew a chair to the fire, as one striving to feel at home. His young host settled near him, cigaret-case in hand.

"I'm keeping you from many pressing engagements, I feel sure, Lieutenant Penross. You see," he lit a cigaret slowly, and his drawling words seemed to vibrate from his deep chest, "I know what these scientists are. One man used to come to my father and talk about open-water, sky, and the northern drift-theory until we all felt cold!"

His face was strikingly handsome, but in his eyes was a certain undefined look that bothered and perplexed the watchful explorer. The absence of servants, the strange silence of the big house, had a peculiar effect on his nerves. His hands sought the sides of his chair mechanically; he looked up once, but did not again meet Blane's luminous eyes.

"Of course, you've been hunted to death by those geographical-people," continued the young American. "It's their business, I suppose, to fix up the new capes and landmarks. Funny how you should have done the thing so easily," he went on; "whipped the immortals, so to speak, and landed yourself in the top hole of fame."

"It was one of the things I wanted to do and I did it," answered Penross, quietly. "Still, one has to thank the ice and weather for a lot."

He almost glanced at Blane as he spoke, but somehow his eyes evaded the terrible meeting-point.

On the wall in front was a framed map of the Arctic Circle. Glancing at it for the first time the explorer's eyes followed a red line that zigzagged from Parry Islands across Greeley's Ford and the Western coast of Greenland, continuing in an unbroken line to the Pole itself.

Young Blane followed his glance like one expecting comment from his visitor.

"You know that route well enough, lieutenant," he said, stooping to the map.

"Know it?" Penross shrugged his shoulders wearily. "It will haunt my dreams until I die."

"The memory of your journey across the last ice-field, I suppose."

"Over the last polar-depression within an *inferno* of rubble-ice," corrected the explorer. "No one could call it an ice-field; it resembled the floor of Tophet frozen hard."

"And the weather?"

"Clear and cold. My dogs were knocked out at the foot of the last hummock that barred me from my goal. I abandoned them and left the sledge under the lee of the barrier. I continued the journey over the accursed rubble-ice on foot."

"And you reached the Pole without your comrades or dogs. Was there no living thing accompanied you?"

"None."

A silence came between them that struck Penross as inhuman and brutal on the part of his young host. Blane sat still in his chair watching the fire, as if his thoughts were among the Arctic floes and giant bergs that would hold his father for ever.

Rising slowly from his seat he indicated, with a pencil, a certain point on the map where the red line ceased to zigzag and ran straight to the Pole.

"It was here you came upon my father!" he said slowly. "The position is marked with a small cross, lieutenant."

"Your father?" Penross stood up; his eyes blazed for a moment. "What do you mean? I did not meet your father."

Blane tapped the cross-marked space with his pencil insistently. "On the north-eastern limit of the Middendorf Glacier. Shall I tell you how you met him, lieutenant? There is no mention of it in your book."

"Probably I passed your father unknowingly, as other explorers have done. One has no time to—"

"You did not pass him," interrupted the young American coldly. "You came upon him sick and ailing on his way to Archangel, after his successful expedition to the Pole."

For one moment the eyes of Penross slanted in Blane's direction. His cheeks

had become livid; sweat stood in large drops on his forehead. He made no attempt to ward off the slowly spoken words that fell like blows upon his ears.

"From what I gather," continued Blane, "you acted swiftly and with decision the moment my father confided to you the news of his achievement. You were still many hundreds of miles from your objective, and, to put it frankly, you were in a hopeless quandary: eight of your men down with scurvy, your provisions at low ebb—what chance had you of beating even Nansen's record? Yet before you, lying sick unto death, was a man who had completed the task which had baffled all human endeavor. Here was Markam Blane, accompanied by a few half-starved dogs, and to all appearances, deserted by his followers. Yet, packed on his sledge were the records of his terrible exploit, the magnetic and meteorological observations, the geological specimens, and other scientific evidence of his journey to the Pole. You—"

"Stop!"

Penross started forward, a fierce challenge in his eyes and pointed with shaking finger at his young host.

"You are a gamester, Blane. You are playing for the great *coup* your father missed. You want to upset my claim to—"

"Be seated, lieutenant." Blane spoke gently and without heat. "The papers you presented to the Royal Geographical Society, on polar-magnetic currents, you stole from my father. The records and observations of his expedition you filched from a sledge while he was dying in his hut."

Penross sat still, his big chin thrust out as if listening to a voice calling across the Arctic wind-sheds. The light had gone from his eyes; a dead man could not have remained more passive and silent.

"You looted the sledge," continued the American with merciless reiteration, "belonging to the man who had forestalled you, the man who had wrested from the ice-bound solitudes what you and others had dreamed of winning. You looted his sledge and left him."

"It's a lie, you gamester!"

"And the papers you stole helped to

perpetrate the greatest fraud of the Twentieth century."

Penross looked up swiftly, a terrible light in his eyes.

"If—if I drag you and your statement before the police," he said hoarsely, "I might give myself another advertisement and sweat you of the wealth you can well spare. You speak of things which happened within the Arctic Circle," he went on with gathering assurance, "as if the Scotland Yard officials might run up in a motor-car, and collect the evidence of my alleged crime."

He took a cigaret from his case and lit it carelessly.

"Your accusation is so obviously malicious, Blane," he went on, "that I feel inclined to ignore it altogether, unless you can bring the North Pole into the witness-box," he added with a sneer.

Maxim Blane stepped to the door softly, and listened for a moment.

"Varlt!" he cried after awhile. "Come here!"

A heavy-shouldered, dwarf-like man entered the room and stood, half-crouching, in the doorway, his narrow, quick-shifting eyes fixed on Penross.

"Varlt," said Blane addressing him gently, "look!"

The man hunched his shoulders, then crossed the room, until his flat face and deep-set eyes were close to the explorer's.

"*Augh, esthom*," he muttered thickly, and his great head nodded twice.

"That man is an Eskimo," snapped Penross. "I do not know him."

"He remembers you, lieutenant."

Blane returned to the fireplace and stood opposite Penross.

"He was a sledge-driver attached to the American expedition, and was following my father according to instructions when he observed you from afar."

"Your father vera seek," grunted the Eskimo. "I see thees man take away t'ings from de sledge."

He pointed a thick forefinger at Penross and his black teeth showed through his cracked lips.

"Heem take away eferyting. *Augh*!"

Penross suppressed an oath as he turned again to Blane.

"What do you want?" he demanded

huskily. "A police court inquiry? Your father's claim upheld upon the word of an Eskimo? The fellow has been drinking brandy," he added bitterly.

"There were two other witnesses, Penross. And Varlt here persuaded them to preserve the looted sledge, and one or two trifles you overlooked. The evidence came to me unsolicited, and by devious ways."

"This—this man tracked and followed me to Archangel!" Penross glared at the Eskimo, his fists clenched at his sides. "Across snow-fields and ice-hummocks to tell his story and draw money from you? How many people will believe him, Maxim Blane?"

The Eskimo craned forward as if about to speak. Thrusting his hand inside his rough garments he drew out the tiny photograph of a young girl and held it to the light.

"Thees we found when you ron away from the seek man. *Augh!* En we found the coat you wear en the wolf-skin glove. Juk en Isob, my brothers, see you go to Markam Blane en hees hut. *Augh!* I spik truth."

Penross retreated to his chair as if it were a haven of refuge from the Eskimo's terrible grimace. His eyes grew nimble as pointed steel, for a moment, until despair sprang from their roots, leaving him dull and shivering by Blane's fire-side.

"You have kept the affair quiet," he said brokenly. "Why?"

"I have neither helped nor suppressed the story," was the answer. "It came unsolicited, and like Niagara it will thunder on its way, once caught in the journalistic rapids."

The explorer's fists remained clenched between his knees. He did not look up as the Eskimo receded from the room. In a lethargic way he was aware that Blane had taken the photograph from the man's hand, and placed it somewhat reverently on the table at his elbow.

He stared at the girl's face like one newly awakened from a long Arctic sleep, and put it aside. But in his mind was another picture that could not be pushed away—the picture of the Middendorf Glacier growing livid in the

Arctic twilight. He saw the lonely hut standing on the edge of a sullen moraine, the pack of yelping Ostiak dogs huddling within, snarling, and showing their wolf-like fangs as he entered. Through the smoke of the interior he saw the figure of a white-haired man lying on the ground. . . . Curse those dogs! how they had leaped and snatched at his throat until he bludgeoned their leader into silence. And the sick man lying on the ground had watched him, voicelessly and without protest, until his hands fell upon the leather case which held the journal and scientific papers belonging to the American expedition. The man's cry of agony reached him even now across the illimitable ice-fields!

There was no speech in Penross as he recalled his brief farewell-nod to the dying explorer he had met and deserted so swiftly. His tongue grew dry until it clung to the roof of his mouth.

Blane watched and his wrath died out at sight of the half-crouching figure in the chair. He stooped, touched the bent shoulder, but the face did not look up; the hands were still clenched between the tightly drawn knees.

"Penross," he began gently, "I am not judging you without having looked into your past. I know what the expedition meant to you. All your life you dreamed of that lone region, where the white siren sits holding forth her crown of everlasting fame. All your life you dreamed of her, Penross, just as my father had done. From boyhood you starved and suffered so you might buy books and train your body for its fight with the merciless North. Inch by inch you won your way into the schools of polar-research until your name held good among navigators and scientists. Your chance came at last, and you seized it with both hands: only once did you look back, but the sweet-faced girl in the picture nodded to you, and waited through the years of your absence. Penross, are you listening?"

There was no answer.

"Your ship went North, and your heart was full of lion-courage until the giant bergs flung you back and broke it. Then chance lent a hand, and threw you in the way of my father. He was beyond hope,

perhaps, but the achievement was his and you stole it, Penross; you took what you needed and ran away. But you had not reckoned on the flat-browed little people of the North. They followed you, unerring as dogs; they belled the story of your theft from cape to cape, from *fiord* to *fiord*, until the lonely fur-traders picked it up and passed it on into the South to me."

Blane stepped to the window as he finished speaking, and glanced into the square below. The voice of a newsboy had reached him, screaming its latest horror in evening-journalism. It passed swiftly; another followed, until the square seemed alive with shouting newsboys.

Penross raised his head with a jerk of a lashed steer. Then he seemed to crawl to the window, his livid face pressed to the pane.

"What was that? What are they saying?" he said hoarsely.

Another voice reached them, high-pitched and clearer than the others.

"Terrible Story of the Arctic Regions. Fate of Markam Blane Revealed. Explorer Left to Die! Extry!"

"The American people have cabled the news." Blane spoke without a trace of emotion in his voice. "Now for the Deluge."

Penross drew himself together stiffly, like one who had slipped and fallen from a great height; half-way across the room he turned as if his breath had failed.

"May I go?" he asked.

Blane nodded, his face still at the window. "Good-by."

The door closed softly. He listened to Penross' footsteps descending the stairs until they passed into the square. Flinging himself on the couch he covered his face with both hands.

The Eskimo, waiting in the next room, wondered at the sound of the sobbing voice.

A Lone Hand in Camp Despair

BY WALTER ARCHER FROST

ILLUSTRATED BY JOHN R. MORTON

I.

BY this time, they'd rolled to the very edge, with a clear drop into 3,000 feet of air; the rustler'd got his gun out somehow, but, before he could pull, Dan's knife"—

A placid snore interrupted the speaker, and, realizing that his narrative was too tame to hold his audience, he tilted back his chair, and puffed his pipe into a feeble glow.

We were dozing on the porch of what Charity called Bale's "hotel." Our eyes, when open, watched the sun-baked adobes writhe and quiver in the sapphire glare, or followed the burnished arc of sky, and made us wonder if the rain could ever fall or the cool Trades could

ever blow again. Midsummer silence, hung on everything, and we, admitting our lack of stamina, marveled, at length, to find one potent thing in sight—a figure under a dust-cloud, climbing the "trail" to Camp Despair.

Most of us had come up the *cañon* under a cloud of some sort, either of felony, frailty, or failure somewhere else. A new start, and no questions asked, was what we gave at Camp Despair, and we christened our new recruits so understandingly that, when "Texas" Ike got a letter sent to Joseph Cook, and "Red" Carter went white after reading one addressed to Stephen Hall, it didn't bother us, or make us drop the *alias* for the actual. And this man, now coming up the "trail," would be another such—another



John R. Morton

"Lone hand" he was to us from the start

who'd been hurt, you understand, and crawled away to hide.

Two minutes more, and he was standing before us, and, because he was big and thin, tired-eyed, and without a partner, we gave him a name in connotation strong. "Lone Hand," he was to us from the start.

About all the money he'd brought along went to "Texas" for the poorest claim in Camp Despair; only a fool would have accepted it as a gift, and it took more than a fool to give the price he paid.

We didn't say a word while they were fixing up the deal, but when "Lone

Hand" had gone, "Freckle," ex-cowboy, roused himself in doubtful amiability.

"In San Antonio, Ike, we strung up a fellow, once," he said, "and he wasn't as big a thief as you. Understand, I don't object to unloading a Russell Sage, but a 'puncher,' the morning after he'd got his pay, could see you'd just about cleaned that chap complete."

"Well," Ike responded, and he wasn't any too much abashed, "I rather reckon I did relieve him some; but, anyway, his money's safer on me than him, for you boys'd had him in a game in half an hour, and when you'd got through, he couldn't have bought himself a drink.

With me—well, I aint so easy as that, you recollect."

And the only consistently lucky gambler in the camp, grinned modestly.

"Any way," he went on, "the man looks as if he was going to croak—"

"'Croak' nothin'!"

And following the direction of "Freckle's" extended arm, we saw "Lone Hand" on his red-hot hill-side, already breaking ground.

Assuredly, the man was of a type unknown to us, for he didn't know by sight "Greaser" Ramon, who dispensed behind the bar at Bale's, and he never sat under those who connected "banks" and "wheels." We couldn't blame a man like that for preferring seclusion on his hill-side to our company, though, if he'd been different, we'd have taught him sociability.

Twice a month he ambled down for supplies, timing his trips with the coming of the mails; friendly, he was, in a quiet sort of way, but mad for work, and always hurried back to his shack again. We knew only that he lived, not how.

And thus a year passed.

Then came a day when we noticed his cabin had a strange, one-sided look, and, after we'd guessed about it for half a morning, "Red" Carter voiced the sentiments of the crowd:

"Let's be some neighborly, and see what he's up to, anyway!"

If it hadn't been for our curiosity, we couldn't have climbed that hill, and, after we got up it, there wasn't much to see; just "Lone Hand" digging the way he always had.

He'd seen us coming, and smiled, as he lifted his big-boned body from the hole in which he stood.

"I'm glad you've come," he said, and gave us, all 'round, a hand that would take about a No. 11 glove. We hadn't had a shake like that for years, and the way he did it made us wish we'd come before, and set us thinking, as we stretched out on the ground.

At first, we lied like men about our claims; and then we asked him how his "works" were coming on. He said he hadn't been as lucky as the rest of us; as a matter of fact, he hadn't seen a touch

of color yet, but he'd work on, right hard, and, pretty soon, he guessed he'd make a "strike."

A "strike!" Why, every man of us had tried that claim; and two had died there; washed the worthless stuff until they dropped; then—two puffs of smoke; and then—their burial.

As he spoke, we saw the disappointment in his eyes, and knew that his bad luck was telling on him; strong as he was, the thing was bound to tell. But, somehow, I didn't think we'd have to bury him, for he wasn't like the other men who had "cashed in," there on the hill above Camp Despair. Quiet, he was and shy; one of your big men—big all round—the sort that work can't kill, though something else might do it—a girl, for example, if she had the mind.

Just then, he spoke: "I'm fixing up the place for Car'line."

"His wife," we guessed. There were husbands, but no wives, at Camp Despair; the wives were elsewhere, place indefinite.

He went on.

"Car'line, she's down at 'Frisco, waiting. We're going to be married, when I make my strike." Then he stood up.

"Come in and look around! I've done the best I could—for her."

It wasn't much of a house, you might have said; but he was putting an "L" addition on to it—it was that had given it the one-sided look, you know—and there were a table, chairs, bureau, and a bed—no shake-down-and-roll-up-in-a-blanket sort—that weren't to be matched in all Despair. He hadn't had a mighty lot of tools, but everything was neat and strong, and sort of purty, too; just "beat us plum to hell," as "Freckle" put it every time he looked.

And he had done it all for "Car'line." And she was coming, when he made his "strike." We had found out the secret of his energy and confidence.

II.

For what happened next, I'm offering no excuse, though, in fairness to the boys, it might be said that clouds of hot rain



The cowboy had come on behind her, but we didn't notice him

fell on scorched and hissing earth, and cave-ins followed wash-outs, and bad luck was everywhere. And morbid introspection settled close on luckless Camp Despair. You know the sort of thing that does to men—It maddened them, and, in the midst of their bitter brooding, they

thought of "Lone Hand" and his "game."

They cursed the steady strength which carried him through luck as bad as theirs; they cursed his purpose, and the love that told him he could not fail: cursed it because, whatever fortune came to them, no one would heed or care. They

told each other this, and then, to let him get their point of view, they wrote a telegram.

Got tired of waiting for you and I've found another man.

That was the way they wrote it, and they signed it "Car'line." The address hadn't been hard to get, for he wrote her twice a month, and Bill Healey took the letters down the "trail." From Camp Despair it went to 'Frisco, and, after four days came back with the mails.

I remember the day "Lone Hand" next came down for supplies. He had got thinner, like the rest of us, for the heat and damp was enough to make a man know what there was in hell. Yes, he was tired; there wasn't a doubt of that: but his face got bright, as he took the message in his hands. It was from her, he guessed, and then he broke the seal.

About the whole camp was there to see him open it, but, somehow, there wasn't just the fun they'd counted on.

He read the words, then looked about him, staring at us as if he hadn't seen us before; then, he turned round and his eyes went here and there, as if he were trying hard to make out just where he was and couldn't find the place; he had the look of a man who'd been knifed or shot up, and was just falling into unconsciousness. You know the sort, they don't seem to realize what the trouble is. Then his lips moved, though we couldn't get what he said. It wasn't anything that any living thing could have understood, I guess; and then, he staggered a few steps, and getting his bearings, in a hazy sort of fashion, he groped his way slowly up the hill.

We watched him, as he went by us, and no man said a word, though he wouldn't have heard us, if we'd fired a .44. No, we didn't say a word; there wasn't much *to* say. We did a lot of thinking, just about that time, you'd better reckon—did more of it in the next three minutes than we'd done in twice that many years.

But thinking wasn't enough to meet a thing like this. You see "Lone Hand" wasn't a whole lot like the rest of us; he hadn't seen the joke, and the thing had fallen through.

And now—

Bale spoke.

"Get 'Car'line!"

And "Freckle," on Carter's thoroughbred, with a led-horse, was racing down the "trail," with orders to kill the mounts, but get that girl from 'Frisco to the Camp, in time.

For us—we waited; we were busy though, for, while he was shaving the record to the coast, we were just naturally "salting" the poorest claim in Camp Despair. "Salting" it? I guess—pumping all the stuff we had on hand, quartz, nuggets, and pay-dirt, into the holes he'd dug, for her. We'd given "Freckle" a letter to her, saying that "Lone Hand" had made his "strike," been shook up by a cave-in, or he'd come himself; so, you see, there wasn't any other way; we had to "salt" the claim to make our story good. We'd got all through with joking, you'd better realize.

I disremember how the days went by, but each was shorter than the one that followed.

At first we took it quiet, being busy, as I said before. But, by the time we'd ought to heard from them and hadn't, we felt our ginger drop; got afraid our telegram was true, and that she'd contracted with another man. By the fourth day, we'd plum given up. We didn't count, though.

"Lone Hand!"

Did you ever see a man, big, strong, and fine, who'd lost the only thing he lived for? That was him! The man, whom, before, no effort could have tried, was white-faced, listless, silent, hopeless, dead to everything. He'd just sit quietly, his unseeing eyes fixed on the Western ranges, where he had used to look, as if he saw her, day by day; and then, he'd stare at the gashes in the hill-side where he'd broken through for gold that hadn't been half so dear to him; then turn and look at all the little, cussed, foolish things he'd made for her. He'd think, it may be, but he never said a word; for you see, he didn't realize we knew.

No, we didn't laugh a great deal, just about that time. We sat and watched and waited by him, for, somehow, every man

in Camp Despair had come up that hill-side and camped out, wishing about as hard as "Lone Hand" did that "Car-line" were there.

Yes, we camped out there, but, always, we poured in the ore; and many a fellow among us made his strike, working forgotten "claims" for him and her—but never thought of it, more than that it would help to piece our story out—poured in the stuff, until the very ground the cabin stood on'd have run a golden stream, if it had taken fire.

And then, we quit. For what was the use? We hadn't a hope of him—or her—for she'd 'a' come long before, if she'd been true to him.

That afternoon, we came down the

hill—except one man who was sort o' taking care of him—and went to Bale's, though there wasn't much stuff sold, as I recollect. There wasn't much talking, either; but, at last, a man spoke up.

"We're bad enough," says he, "but I've sure got my opinion of this 'Car-line!'"

"You're right," says someone else; "and I've got a picture of the chap she went with—new clothes, sassy, little 2x4, the sort you see around them"—

He didn't finish, for just then Bale shouted:

"Boys, she's here!"

A dozen pairs of feet slid off the tables noiselessly, and we stood up—as you'd have done—for she was young, and pink



John R. Morton

All tired he was, and worn out—asleep, I guess

and white by turns, and so scared of us.

The cowboy had come in behind her, but we didn't notice him.

"I hope," said Carter, "that the man who showed you the way here, I mean brought you, was quiet and respectful. If he wasn't—"

"He'll die," somebody murmured.

"By torture," interrupted Sanders.

"And slow," came in the voice of a man for whom, dead or alive, Wells Fargo offered seven thousand cash.

But she didn't seem to hear us:

"Where is the man you call 'Lone Hand?' I—"

She couldn't get out another word.

We knew then that "Freckle" hadn't told, and that it was for us to do it, but somehow we didn't know how to finish it. Ike, however, managed, after a moment, to get his nerve.

"I'll take you to him," says he, and they started, with us coming on behind.

I won't forget that climb. After a while, we got there, and Ike pointed through the door.

He didn't say much, just — "He's there!"

"Lone Hand" was sitting where he always sat—his head on his arm, the other hanging down, till his big hand almost rested, lifeless, on the floor. All tired, he was, and worn-out—asleep, I guess, and never wanting to wake up again, for, before him was—the telegram.

She'd gone to him—though we hadn't seen her go—and she read it, once. Then she turned to us. "Your joke, that was, I s'pose," she said, low, "but—well, of course you couldn't understand a man like him."

It wasn't much—she and "Lone Hand" weren't the kind that says a great deal—but the way she said it—that was the thing that hurt.

She just looked straight through us, then got down on her knees, until his head, all rough and coarse, was resting, soft-like, on her neck, in a way she seemed to know was good for him.

And she was right, for his eyes came open, and he looked up at her; then, that big back of his got limp and fell against her, his arm around her as if it never could let go. And then—

We just touched air and the high places going down that hill!

We'd caught a doctor from the Big Divide, and when, after a short while, he came down from them, he sure cut loose after our outfit. I don't like to remember the way he talked to us, but we took it meek, for he was dead right, and we knew it just as well as he did.

When he got through, we stood up trembling.

"Is there anything we can do for him or her?" we asked.

"Do for them? Get them the Justice of the Peace," he said—and he was laughing now, "for that man is going to live!"

The judge came quick, as I remember it, and we went up and saw him marry them.

That man, "Lone Hand," his face was white and thin, and he was just looking happiness out of those sad eyes of his. He hadn't a word to say of the way we'd lied to him; maybe the shape we were in ourselves had something to do with his overlooking it. Anyway, he was happy as a man could want to be. And her! Well, you wouldn't understand or believe me, for you never saw that girl that he called "Car'line!"

We didn't celebrate a whole lot; it was too near the time before she'd come. But we asked their permission to let off one firecracker, like the kids do, back in God's Country, on the Fourth. They let us, and the cracker was a good long stick of dynamite; some expensive, but it made a noise, and money didn't count for much, just then, at Camp Despair.

We set the stuff in one of the hundred shafts that "Lone Hand" had dug, and when the stones had got through falling, and the dust had cleared away, we saw at the bottom and on the sides of the new-blown hole the dull and yellow gleam of gold!

Gold? Yes, GOLD! GOLD! GOLD!

Why, the very ground we walked on was shining with it. And it wasn't the stuff we'd brought to salt the place. It was just naturally there, all on his land, where it had been hid so long, waiting for the Luck of a Lone Hand, played out, and winning at last, in Camp Despair.



Parisian Fashion Model XXXIII B

FROM LIFE

By special contract with
REUTLINGER, PARIS

Maison Drécoll:—Street costume of violet, the jacket trimmed
with velour and soutache braid.



Parisian Fashion Model XXXIV B

FROM LIFE

By special contract with
REUTLINGER, PARIS

Maison Redfern:—Tailored costume of mauve with a velvet
collar.



Parisian Fashion Model XXXV B

FROM LIFE

By special contract with
REUTLINGER, PARIS

Maison Ney Sœurs:—Afternoon costume of black and cream
striped goods: the corsage is trimmed with velvet.



Parisian Fashion Model XXXVI B

FROM LIFE

By special contract with
REUTLINGER, PARIS

Maison Levillon:—Evening costume of light blue satin trimmed
with silk and gold embroidery.



Parisian Fashion Model XXXVII B

FROM LIFE

By special contract with · Maison Barroin:—Evening costume of black spangled mousseline, the corsage trimmed with Venetian lace.
REUTLINGER, PARIS



Parisian Fashion Model XXXVIII B
FROM LIFE

By special contract with Maison Béchoff-David:—Evening coat of cream satin trimmed
REUTLINGER, PARIS with soutache, black velvet, and Venetian lace.



Parisian Fashion Model XXXIX B
FROM LIFE

By special contract with
REUTLINGER, PARIS

Maison Rondeau:—Afternoon costume of straw colored crêpe
de chine trimmed with rose and straw embroidery.



Parisian Fashion Model XL B
FROM LIFE

By special contract with
REUTLINGER, PARIS

Maison Ney Sœurs:—Afternoon costume of wine colored moiré
trimmed with soutache.

SOME DRAMAS OF THE DAY

By LOUIS V. DE FOE



TWO years ago Mme. Alla Nazimova, an alien, unknown and unable to speak the English language, was all but submerged in the weary struggle for daily subsistence amid the gloom and squalor of New York's polyglot East Side.

To-day the appearance of her name in the cast of a new play is sufficient to fill a Broadway theatre with expectant thousands. Her appointments and engagements are so numerous and her interests are so diverse that she requires a secretary to keep track of them.

She has covered a great gulf between obscurity and fame at almost a single bound. This feat alone should give her a substantial claim to a place in the small list of contemporary geniuses of the stage. Yet in any other profession or business, it is probable that this Russian woman, of remarkable energy, magnetic temperament, and native ability, would have accomplished as much.

It was by her impersonations of the erotic heroines of Ibsen that Mme. Nazimova compelled the attention of the artistic world. When she played *Hedda Gabler* in broken English a season and

a half ago people wondered. When they saw her complete metamorphosis as *Nora Helmer* in "A Doll's House" they marveled. This year the light of her *Hilda Wangel* shot through the fog of "The Master Builder" and then her conquest was complete. It must not be forgotten, however, that her successes have been restricted to a narrow range of parts.

At this writing she is the temporary victim either of her own overconfidence or the faulty advice of others. Near-Ibsen, freighted with a conglomeration of parroted nonsense and half-baked, decadent ideas, has forced her into unexpected eclipse.

Mr. Owen Johnson is the author of this mixture of Ibsen-and-water, entitled "The Comet," with which Mme. Nazimova has unfortunately cast her lot. It is seldom that I have encountered a play which rears such an imposing, philosophic front and yet contains so little. For two acts the motive is submerged in a sea of exotic sentiment exchanged between a life-wearied, heartless, revenge-seeking adventuress whose milk of human kindness has been turned to gall by a man's cruelty and a visionary, feather-brained youth in whom this human icicle stirs a fierce, blind passion.



A strong scene from Act III of "The Comet"

Photograph by Hallen, N. Y.

Then, after the irrational dissertation is exhausted, the expected "triangle" begins to assume form, a definite relationship of the characters is established, and the deferred dramatic forces emit their first fire. At the apex of the "triangle" stands *Lona*, actress-adventuress, otherwise known as "El Comet," because she sheds her light upon all the stationary planets in her orbit. At the other two angles are father and son.

The worst that can be charged against what has preceded is that it is irrational. Now, with the sudden unfolding of the story, comes a stench.

Lona had been betrayed in her youth by *Dr. Leopold Ravenel*, a supposedly God-fearing and philanthropic physician of a little town in the Spanish Pyrenees. He had turned her out upon a pitiless world. Her child had starved at her breast. But her sin had given her strength and she had soared into a brilliant career.



"Her Enfrance"

Mme. Alla Nazimova in "The Comet"

Photograph by Hallen, N. Y.

The debt which one man owed her she had squared by roving the earth and ruining other men. And now she had returned to the scene of her undoing to destroy an old memory—to look upon her betrayer, grown old and gray, lost to ambition and without joy. Here was to be her greatest revenge!

She had found, instead, the physician's son, "with fiery eyes and tangled black hair" and he had put new fire into her dead passion. Her revenge against the father could best be fed by leading this son out into the world, "as high as he could vault."

The doctor's struggle to shield his son from *Lona's* influence ensues. Baffled at every turn, he reluctantly plays his last

card. He invokes the law that governs even the beasts—"The father and the son shall not share the same woman."

Further nauseous developments are interrupted by the son's sensible retirement



Miss Mabel Taliaferro and her horse in Act III of "Polly of the Circus"

Photograph by Byron, N. Y.

to a chamber above to blow out his inconsequential brains, so the play has to end here.

It was probably with her eyes fixed upon the vampire-like character of *Lona*, and not upon the surrounding play, that Mme. Nazimova was led to make her selection. As a matter of fact, she plays it brilliantly, indicating with amazing fidelity its burned-out passion, frigid heartlessness, and, afterwards, its wild, blind passion. There is a line which suggests that *Lona* symbolizes the Sphinx and, indeed, the actress makes her as human and yet as unhuman as the Riddle of the Desert. She wears a hideous, high-collared, trailing gown of filmy gray, which has the effect of heightening her stature and entirely transforming her physical appearance until it is totally unlike any other creature whom she has heretofore impersonated.

To do Mr. Johnson justice it must also be said that his first play contains traces of ability in its occasional moments of passionate dialogue and in the technical methods by which he governs the move-

ments of his characters. But he has been over-feeding on Ibsen and Maeterlinck.

An amiable conspiracy is very evidently concealed somewhere in the light dialogue and pretty scenery of "Under the Greenwood Tree." A first glance would indicate that H. V. Esmond wrote the sylvan comedy as an idyl of the simple life, with the ulterior motive of launching satirical shafts at the various foibles of wealthy and fashionable society.

But Miss Maxine Elliott, who is now devoting her pulchritude to its leading rôle of *Mary Hamilton*, has not an ounce of subtlety in her histrionic make-up. Romance, instead, is her long suit. So she quite misses the point of the little play by using it merely as a frame for her raven tresses and piercing eyes. She is a rare beauty, though her good looks are not as impressive as they were before she became so conscious of them.

Less sentimentously acted, "Under the Greenwood Tree" would be a diverting bit of whimsicality. The style of the performance by Miss Elliott and her asso-

ciates makes it little more than a sketch of insipidity. The author surely has the right to perfect interpretation, and I do not believe he ever intended that his sentiment should be taken as seriously as Miss Elliott represents it.

Mary Hamilton, whom she impersonates, is so burdened with her fortune of fifteen million dollars and her city hangers-on, who want to marry it, that she seeks refuge with her maid from conventional life by turning gypsy. They stock up a caravan with silver plate and all the comforts of home and go wandering in the New Forest. It's a merry, care-free life that they set out to lead.

But down upon them swoops the squire on whose property they are trespassing, and straightway he falls victim to those coal-black eyes. He is knocked on the head by a band of ruffians and *Mary* gets a chance to nurse him back to consciousness. These details occupy the greater part of two acts and, somehow, they are so artificial that they make scarcely any impression at all. And when the last curtain falls, a regret lingers in the audience's mind that it has been defrauded of a view of that famous bathing-suit, which the press-agent talks so voluminously about, but which Miss Elliott's long wrap hides so discreetly.

Not that I am curious about bathing suits. I live too near the New Jersey coast for that. I merely want to know whether Miss Elliott's bifurcated garment is up to its advertised quality. Perhaps, however, this is off the main theme.

Of the large supporting company Miss Mary Jerrold, who plays *Peggy*, the maid, is by long odds the most efficient.

In this uncertain season it is almost

impossible to gauge the public taste. Theatrical producers are as helpless in this respect as dramatic-critics, but, happily for the latter, the former bear the burden, for they pay the bills.

In a normal year I would call Miss Margaret Mayo's little romance, "*Polly of the Circus*," a stunt—pardon, but the word is about to go into the dictionaries—rather than a play, and I would call attention to the fact that theatrical stunts are rarely very long-lived. But as it is now being presented in New York, "*Polly*" is receiving a generous share of atten-

tion and it begins to look as if it would cleave its way to considerable success. Of consequence as dramatic-art, however, it can claim none, although I cheerfully concede its power to entertain.

Mr. Frederick Thompson, showman—it was he who created Luna Park and turned the dream of the giant Hippodrome into an actuality—comes to the surface in the little play much stronger than Miss Mayo, dramatist. But the influence who holds its incongruous parts together and weaves its romantic and pathetic charm is Miss Mabel Taliaferro.

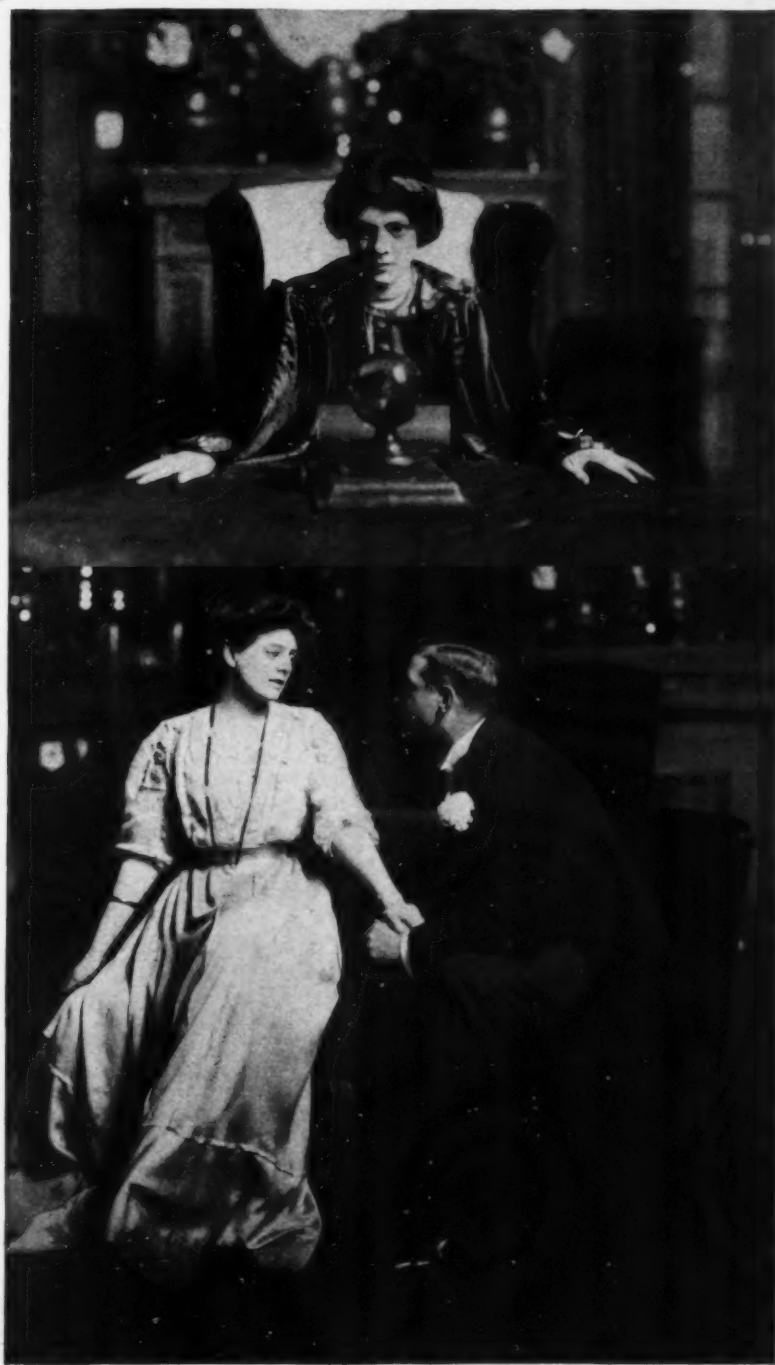
ro, the once child-actress who, unlike Peter Pan, persisted in growing up.

Polly is a bareback-rider in one of those massive canvas caravans which pitch their tents, when the robins return, on the village greens. In this particular instance the tents are pitched hard by a moss-grown church and lilac entwined parsonage where the *Rev. John Douglass*, bachelor, tends his spiritual flock and labors to turn into snow-white lambs the numerous goats of the community.

In the brilliant equestrian climax of the traveling show, *Bingo*, the fat-backed, white ring-horse stumbles and *Polly*, un-



Miss Mabel Taliaferro in "*Polly of the Circus*"



Miss Ethel Barrymore in 2 strong scenes from
her latest play "Her Sister"
The upper picture shows Miss Barrymore in
the character of the fortune-teller.
Photographs by Hall, N. Y.



Miss Maxine Elliott and Charles Cherry in "Under the Greenwood Tree"

conscious, in all her spangled finery, is borne by *Mother Jim*, the boss canvasman, and *Uncle Toby*, the acrobatic clown—her steadfast friends—to the spare bed-room of the parsonage.

Now, of course, you know the rest of the story. But wait a bit. *Polly* is unlettered and all but unregenerate. By the time she awakens to consciousness the show has folded its tents and has lumbered on its way. Propped up in her snow-white bed *Polly* tells her good Samaritan stray bits of her past history.

"My mother," she says, "was the greatest rider of her day, but she passed away by falling off a trapeze. Now what do you think of that! As for father, he got his in a lion's cage."

At her first insight into the philanthropic calling of a country parson this *Polly* of the sawdust world grows big-eyed with wonder.

"Do you give money to people?" she asks. "How strange! We try to get it away from them."

"And you show in the same town a whole year!" she exclaims. "Well, take

this from me, if we circus-people tried to do that we'd be broke in six weeks."

But *Polly* takes to her new life like a duck to water. In fact, she soon forgets all about the circus—all but *Mother Jim* and *Uncle Toby*. Before long she speaks with the grammatical precision of a New England schoolma'am. She is the crony of every village child. And the parson looks at her with beaming eyes and swelling heart.

Then—the village gossips begin to talk. *Deacon Strong* makes it clear to *Parson Douglass* that the circus-waif will no longer be tolerated under the parsonage roof. The complaint falls on deaf ears, and then *Deacon Strong* passes the ultimatum on to *Polly*, herself.

She doesn't want to go away. Of course not! But to remain is to ruin her benefactor's life. So back to the sawdust and *Bingo's* fat back wanders the broken-hearted little waif, carrying with her the sunshine that had brightened the good parson's prosaic life.

A year elapses. The circus again pitches its tents on the village-green, hard

by the moss-grown church. *Polly* all in spangles is to ride again and—

Here Miss Mayo, playwright, leaves off and *Mr. Thompson*, showman, begins. The latter puts no faith in imagination. The real article is none too good for him. So the stage suddenly becomes a sawdust arena with performing horses, gyrating aerialists, joking clowns, tumblers, acrobats and even a "dip of death."

And here, finally, the parson finds his *Polly* and gathers her to his breast, to part from her no more.

Hand in hand in the twilight they stand on the deserted common, watching the caravan as it winds its way slowly over the distant hills.

There are three or four excellent actors in the company, but the limelight is all for little Miss Taliaferro who plays *Polly* in a vein of touching sentiment. In fact she quite justifies the extravagant outlay which *Mr. Thompson* has risked on this play or circus—which?

In a sketch of the Barrymore "children" in last August's issue of THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE I referred to the peculiar pervers-



Miss Maxine Elliott in the famous bathing-suit costume in "Under the Greenwood Tree"

Photograph by Otto Sarony Co. N. Y.

ity in the case of Miss Ethel Barrymore, which makes her content in this, the golden hour of her career, to remain a theatrical exhibit rather than to cultivate the abilities, by the grace of which she might some day become a really fine dramatic *artiste*.

None of the other young celebrities, except Miss Maude Adams, enjoys a cosier niche in the affections of theatre-goers. How great is her popularity has been shown again by the numbers who left their hearthstones and dismantled trees on Christmas-night to witness Miss Barrymore's performance in "*Her Sister*," the new comedy by *Mr. Clyde Fitch* and *Mr. Cosmo Gordon Lennox* which has been selected this year to set off her charms. It is principally sugar and water but, thanks to the personality of its star, it is a comparative success and it will doubtless serve her until her departure for London in June. To the critical sense, however, she affords just about as much satisfaction as if one of her numerous photographs were displayed in life-size behind the curtain.

The piece enables

Miss Barrymore to play, as nearly as I can remember, her first dual rôle. Throughout the first act, carefully undisguised in a black wig and hideous spangles, she appears as "Isis," a young crystal-gazing charlatan in a Bond Street, London, fortune-telling emporium. This act is superior to the two which follow, for the lines are nimble with Mr. Fitch's wit and pungent with his satire.

Under her real name, *Eleanor Alderson*, "Isis" afterwards develops into a self-sacrificing heroine in an attempt to shield her half-sister from the unjust suspicion of being the co-respondent in a New York divorce case. There are a few scurrying storm clouds, through which the sunshine breaks just before the final curtain.

Some of the details of the story are that *Eleanor Alderson* has met in a railway-carriage the smug, wealthy son of a deceased middle-class manufacturer and has fallen in love with him. Motherly solicitude for the welfare of her precious cub leads the pretentious *Mrs. Bickley* to send her sensible and experienced brother, *Arnold Collingworth*, around to the Bond Street emporium to investigate the character of her future daughter-in-law. He, of course, is profoundly impressed with the earnest, self-possessed girl whom his blundering nephew has had the good luck to capture.

At a subsequent time *Eleanor* is a guest at the *Bickley's* country estate and is getting on famously in her new circle when *Mrs. Herriod*, a shady adjunct of the family, swoops down upon her and causes an explosion by exhibiting a New

York newspaper containing an account of the divorce scandal, illustrated with the young woman's photograph, which had been found by reporters among the effects of her indiscreet sister.

To explain the mistake would be to destroy that sister's chance to make a match with the guardian of *Eleanor's* fiancé. So, after an ineffectual struggle and some expert verbal fencing, she allows the accusation to rest upon her and sees her cad of a lover take to cover. But now comes *Collingworth*, whose heart is set upon *Eleanor* and who refuses to believe in her guilt. He skilfully goes to the bottom of the tangle, and then triumphantly carries off the misused young girl as his bride.

The play puts no tax upon Miss Barrymore, although it contrives to display her in some of her prettiest moods. It may be worth while to add that Mr. Arthur Byron, in the character of *Collingworth*, is now her leading man, Mr. Bruce McRae, who so long occupied that position, having wearied of the thankless task of posing as a foil for a successful star.

Another member of the company to whom mention is due is Miss Louise Drew, a daughter of Mr. John Drew. This young woman, who is bent upon following in her family's profession, has been mainly successful up to the present time in concealing all traces of talent. In "Her Sister" she appears as a high-flown, cockney secretary and she really gives a good account of herself. She may yet be her father's leading actress. She has time, at least, for Mr. Drew shows a positive disinclination to grow old.

